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"Die Walküre"—Act III. Design by Adolph Appia

The scenery lending emphasis to the actor and the actor lending beauty to the scene.

THE THEATRE OF TO-DAY

BY

HIRAM KELLY MODERWELL

WITH THIRTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS
AND NUMEROUS LINE CUTS IN THE TEXT

CANCELED

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TO
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FOREWORD

THIS book is intended as a description and explanation of the new forces which have entered theatrical production in the last ten years, judged in the light of their probable historical importance as well as of their growing contemporary influence. The remarkable broadening of the field within the decade makes it necessary that such a book shall treat not only of dramatic literature, but of almost all the arts—painting, architecture, colour, design, music—of social theory and its economic nexus, and of scientific knowledge of various kinds. These have been treated as simply as possible in their relation and application to the most advanced and representative theatres of Europe and America.

In attempting such a task two things become almost inevitable: the breadth of the field makes it necessary to treat the various subjects in perhaps an oversimplified and sometimes superficial manner; and the need of emphasizing only the essential in the mass of material at hand makes the volume chiefly concerned with the theatres of Germany and Russia, since it is chiefly in those countries that the important work is being done. The superficiality of treatment, so far as it is not the fault of the author, is only the inevitable result of an attempt to get a bird's-eye-view of a broad and complex subject, as yet little treated in books. The continued emphasis upon Europe in speaking of "the theatre" in the course of the following pages must not

be taken as belittling the vigorous American theatre. The many statements made about "the modern theatre" are not meant to refer to existing theatres in general, and in this light would frequently be quite at variance with the facts; they refer to the *modern* aspect of the modern theatre, or perhaps to a somewhat idealised theatre which the author has invented in order to set the essential facts in relief.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

THE GATHERING OF THE FORCES 17

The Theatre of Ten Years Ago and the Theatre of To-day—The Modern Theatre a Synthesis—The Synthesis in its Infancy—The Scientist Comes to the Modern Theatre—The Artist Comes to the Modern Theatre—The Musician Comes to the Modern Theatre—The Thinker Comes to the Modern Theatre—Modern Theatre Architecture—Dawning Democracy—Potentiality of the Modern Theatre.

CHAPTER II

THE MECHANICAL FORCES: IMPROVEMENTS IN STAGE EQUIPMENT 38

The Mechanician Becomes Artist—The Revolving Stage, or Drehbühne—The Rolling Stage, or Wagenbühne—The Sliding Stage, or Schiebebühne—The Dresden Court Theatre—The Cyclorama, or Horizont—Fortuny Lighting—Scene-building—The Problem of Mechanical Operation.

CHAPTER III

THE ARTISTIC FORCES: THE STAGE-SETTING, OR "INSCENIERUNG" 59

"Inscenierung"—Break-down of the Old Stage-Setting—The Producer, or Regisseur—The New Art of Stage-setting—Its Practical Basis and Its Inspiration—Motives of Scene-designing: Artistic Beauty, Dramatic Emphasis, Subjective Truth—Development of Modern Scene-designing—The Three Original Forces: Appia, Fuchs, and Craig—Modern Scene-designing in England and France—Conventionalisation—The Inner Conflict in Modern Inscenierung—Conventionalisation and Representation—Reaction of Modern Inscenierung on Dramatic Art.

CHAPTER IV

THE ARTISTIC FORCES: PURE DESIGN 83

The Value of Abstraction—"Pure Design" in Art—The Elements of Pure Design: Line and Mass—Application of Pure Design—"Absolute" Beauty and Dramatic Suggestion—The Tyranny of Pure Design.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER V

PAGE

THE ARTISTIC FORCES: COLOUR 92

Colour in the Old-fashioned Theatre—Principles of Colour Contrast—Decorative and Symbolic Colour—Bakst—Practical Problems in the Use of Colour in the Theatre: Urban and Pevear.

CHAPTER VI

THE ARTISTIC FORCES: LIGHTING 106

Lighting in the Theatre—Vices in the Old System of Lighting—Principles of Modern Stage-lighting: The Fortuny System—Practical Application of Modern Stage-lighting—Conventional and Natural Lighting.

CHAPTER VII

THE ARTISTIC FORCES: STYLISATION 118

The Meaning of "Style"—Gordon Craig's Exegesis of Stylisation—Motives and Methods of Stylisation—Gordon Craig—Max Reinhardt—Stanislavsky and the Moscow Art Theatre—Problems of Stylisation.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ARTISTIC FORCES: MODERN SCENE DESIGNING IN AMERICA 137

Origin and Nature of the Impulse Toward Artistic Stage-designing in America—Livingston Platt—Josef Urban—J. Monroe Hewlett, J. C. Huffmann, Robert E. Jones, Samuel Hume—Amateur Centres of Artistic Experiment in America.

CHAPTER IX

THE INTELLECTUAL FORCES: PHILOSOPHY IN THE MODERN DRAMA 147

Modern Drama as an Expression of Modern Philosophy—The Conception of Law in Art—The Scientific Spirit in the Modern Drama.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER X

PAGE

THE LITERARY FORCES: FRENCH AND ITALIAN DRAMATISTS 155

Influences Operative on the Modern French Drama—Traditions Behind the Modern French Drama: The Pièce à Thèse, and the Théâtre Libre—The Fashionable Dramatists: Bernstein, Bataille, Donnay, Hervieu, Porto-Riche, Bourget, Curel—The Thoughtful Dramatists: Brieux and Mirbeau—The Italian Realists: Giacosa and Bracco.

CHAPTER XI

THE LITERARY FORCES: THE RUSSIANS 176

Peculiar Development of Russian Literature: Influence of Social Life on Literary Expression—Antecedents of Modern Russian Drama—Russian Historical Plays: Alexander Tolstoy—Leo Tolstoy and His Plays—The "Static" Dramatists: Tchekoff and Maxim Gorky—Andreieff.

CHAPTER XII

THE LITERARY FORCES: DRAMATISTS OF THE GERMANIC NATIONS 199

Growth of the New Drama in the Germanic Nations—The Scandinavian Dramatists: Strindberg and Björnson—The Situation in Germany—The Viennese Comedy Writers: Schnitzler and Bahr—Hermann Heierjmanns—Modern English Drama: Granville Barker, Galsworthy, Shaw—The Lesser Dramatists: Barrie, Arnold Bennett, Stanley Houghton, Masefield, etc.—American Dramatists: Walter, Sheldon, Thomas, Klein, Kennedy, Patterson, Sinclair, Percy MacKaye.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LITERARY FORCES: THE IMAGINATIVE DRAMATISTS 226

The Realistic and the Imaginative in Modern Drama—The Italians: D'Annunzio and Benelli—The French: Rostand, Maeterlinck, and Verhaeren—The German Poetic Dramatists: Hofmannsthal, Hardt, Eulenberg, etc.—Ferenc Molnar and Frank Wedekind.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XIV

PAGE

THE SOCIAL FORCES: MODERN THEATRE ARCHITECTURE 238

Aristocratic Origin of the Prevailing Theatre Structure—The Democratisation of the Modern Theatre: Max Littmann—Littmann's Methods—The Heroic Theatre—The Modern Open-Air Theatre—Vitality in Modern Theatre Architecture.

CHAPTER XV

THE SOCIAL FORCES: MODERN THEATRE ORGANISATION 257

Organisation: the Relation of Theatre to Audience—Old Theatrical Organisation: Passing the Hat—New Theatre Organisation: The Democratic Theatre as Exemplified in the New Free Folk Stage of Berlin—History of the New Free Folk Stage—Fundamental Principles of Democratic Theatre Organisation: The Supplying of the Demand and the Economy of Resources—Rise of the Repertory Theatre in England and America—Significance of the Repertory Theatre.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SOCIAL FORCES: MODERN THEATRE ECONOMICS 283

The American Theatre Not a Democratic Institution—Waste and Economy in Theatrical Producing—Budgets of the Repertory and Long Run Theatres—Value of the Subsidy—Parallel Budgets—Sources of Economy—The Personal Factor in German Theatrical Production—Economics of the English Repertory System—Application of the Repertory Principle to American Theatrical Conditions.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SYNTHESIS OF THE FORCES 313

The Universality of the Modern Theatre—Democratic Vitality the Basis of the Modern Theatre—The Internationalisation of Modern Culture.

APPENDICES 319

ILLUSTRATIONS

"Die Walküre"—Act III. Design by Adolph Appia . . *Frontispiece*
"Parsifal"—Act I. Design by Adolph Appia 22
"Parsifal"—Act II. Design by Adolph Appia 30
The Cathedral Scene from "Faust." Design by Fritz Erler . . 38
The Revolving Stage at Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater . . . 42
The Revolving Stage at Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater . . . 43
The Cellar Scene from Hebbel's "Genoveva," Dresden Court Theatre. Design by Adolph Linnebach 46
Transverse Section Through Stage of the New Court Theatre in Dresden 47
Longitudinal Section of the New Court Theatre in Dresden . . 48
"Tales of Hoffmann"—Act III. Design by Josef Urban . . . 54
"L'Amore Dei Tre Re"—Act I. Design by Josef Urban . . . 62
"L'Amore Dei Tre Re"—Act III. Design by Josef Urban . . . 62
The Silhouette Scene in Germany. Design by Dr. Lert . . . 66
The Silhouette Scene in America 66
"Helène de Sparte." Design by Bakst 82
"Hamlet." Design by Gordon Craig 86
Sophocles's "Electra." Design by Gordon Craig 94
Setting for "Everyman" at Dresden Opera House. Design by Adolph Linnebach 98
Street Scene from "Romeo and Juliet," Deutsches Theater, Berlin 114
"King Lear"—Act I, Scene I, Deutsches Theater, Berlin . . . 118
Scene from Tchekoff's "The Cherry Orchard," Moscow Art Theatre 126
Scene from "Tsar Feodor Ivanovitch." Moscow Art Theatre . 130
Setting for "The Life of Man"—Act II. Moscow Art Theatre . 146
Gluck's "Orpheus"—Act III, Scene I. Design by Golovine . . 150
Molière's "Le Festin de Pierre"—Act II. Design by Golovine 158
Molière's "Le Festin de Pierre"—Act IV. Design by Golovine . 162
Sleep Walking Scene from "Macbeth." Design by Ström and Gliese 178
Design for Maeterlinck's "L'Intruse." Design by Livingston Platt 182
Forest Scene for "Chantecler." Design by Monroe Hewlett . . 190
"The Merchant of Venice"—Act I, Scene II. Design by Robert E. Jones 194

The Reception Hall. Design by Samuel Hume 210
The Duchess's Bedroom, Design by Samuel Hume 210
Interior of the Old Opera House in Bayreuth 214
Exterior of the "Large" Court Theatre at Stuttgart. Professor Max Littmann, Architect 222
The Prinzregenten Theater in Munich. Professor Max Littmann, Architect 226
Auditorium of the Prinzregenten Theater, Munich. Professor Max Littmann, Architect 242
Ground Plan of the Theatre Farnese in Parma 240
Ground Plan of the Old Opera House in Bayreuth 241
Ground Plan of the Residenztheater in Munich 242
Longitudinal Section of the Künstlertheater in Munich . . . 246
Ground Plan of the New Court Theatre in Dresden 247
Foyer of the Court Theatre at Weimar. Professor Max Littmann, Architect 258
Facsimile of Announcement of Plays for the Season of 1912–13 . 263
Facsimile of Announcement of Concerts and Lectures 273
Interior of the Chicago Little Theatre 274
Orchestra of the Greek Theatre at Bakersfield, California. Louis P. Hobart, Architect 282

THE THEATRE OF TO-DAY

CHAPTER I

THE GATHERING OF THE FORCES

TEN years ago this book would have been written entirely about dramatic literature. At that time we thought of the institution of the theatre as being a collection of printed plays together with a few necessary buildings to present them in. The tremendous stimulus given the literary theatre by Ibsen kept our attention working overtime and blinded us to the fact that this dramatic literature—a wonderful literature when we come to look over the whole territory—was being presented under the conditions created for the cramped, conventional, and unreal plays of half a century ago.

Now all this is changed. From an institution of one art the theatre has become, in the space of less than ten years, an institution of all the arts.

Not that the theatre suddenly found its possibilities and became a complete art in place of an incomplete one; not that it has yet found these possibilities and absorbed them. But the realisation began to spread that the theatre was not merely an affair of spoken words and accompanying gestures. And suddenly, almost overnight, the thinkers saw the possibilities of uni-

versality in the theatre, and set out to develop them—slowly, tentatively, but in a spirit of consecration which has given the theatre a largeness and dignity perhaps beyond any other art of to-day.

The peculiarly universal nature of the ideal theatre has caught hold of our imaginations. We begin to see dimly that a drama is far more than characters speaking words and imitating, or attempting to imitate, literal facts. It is a series of pictures; why not give them the beauty which painters have, after centuries of study, given their canvases? It is a series of architectural designs; why not make use of the fine art of the architect? It is often rhythmic spectacle; why not apply to it the fine art of the dance? It is a kaleidoscope of colour; why not make use of the art of colour as the painters have mastered it? It is, in one way and another, a collection of blending sounds; why not mould these sounds together with the art of the musician? Further, the theatre, which is essentially a performance for the crowd, is the most democratic of all the arts; its subject-matter can come from all departments and planes of life, its art can be and always has been greatest when it presents that which is common to all men in such a way that it can be understood by all men; why not organise it so that it shall be the property and the servant of all men, rather than the "cinematograph of the idle rich," or the pink tea of the literary select? The theatre, alone of the arts, can concentrate all the arts in the service of all men. It is this dream which has taken shape and commenced its incarnation in the last ten years.

In a way all this was in the theatre before. The theatre used stage pictures and architectural designs, music, dancing, and colour. But these arts were the

merest accessories, not arts at all. The theatre was a thing which, while using all the arts, cultivated only one. It felt itself under obligation to be beautiful in only one small part of its immense territory, and, as we know, it generally failed in that.

Yet all the arts needed in the ideal synthesis had been highly developed by themselves. All that was needed was waiting patiently at the stage door, ready to enter and make the theatre a palace of wonders in place of a gallery of disillusionment. To let the artist enter and make the stage picture beautiful in design and colour; to let the architect enter and teach the stage how to build instead of imitating; to let the musician enter and make the stage sounds a symphony in their own right; to let the social organiser enter and make the playhouse over from a place of the money-changers into a public institution of service—this was what was needed, and what has begun to come to pass.

This, and one thing more. For the artist, the architect, the musician, the dancer, and the social organiser, are none too good friends, one with the other. They are inclined to be selfish and narrow, to demand all for their own art and neglect the other arts; they are likely to forget that when they use their art in the theatre they must apply it to a new set of materials. There must be some intelligence, some direction, some new artist, in short, to make these men work together toward their new end. This new artist, almost unknown since the days of ancient Greece, is the regisseur or the producer. He must know his art as an art in itself, and must be able to use all the other arts to his purpose. He must be the chief executive of *the art of the drama*. This regisseur, as yet only feeling his way, is

the great artist whom we shall meet time and again in the course of this book.

But this great synthesised art of the drama is as yet only in its first beginnings. The theatre is in a state of transition. We have in it many interesting experiments, and a few results which seem to our limited imaginations to be relatively complete, but on the whole we cannot study the subject as an art. We must see our contemporary theatre as a conglomeration of forces, coming from all directions and roughly centring in one spot, or we shall think falsely about it. The purpose of this book is to trace and describe these forces individually, especially as they are at the present time, and then to indicate what direction they are taking in their common march, and to suggest what may conceivably be their future.

There used to be a conventional structure for the stage from which few theatres, large or small, departed. This structure was a division of the stage by lateral lines or grooves into sections which were the basis for all scene-setting. Scenes were made, almost without exception, by dropping painted canvas from above and by projecting painted "slides" upon the stage along the lateral lines. Nine out of ten scenes were thus constructed entirely of flapping canvas dropped from above and flapping canvas poking out from one side or the other—all in set positions and in parallel lines. There were usually six or eight entrances and exits in the ordinary room, and enough chairs and sofas to seat more or less comfortably the whole court of England. Occasionally there came a "set scene," in which the usual canvas slides were lashed together to represent three sides of a room, and a similar canvas roof, perhaps, was let down from the "flies." This was used

only for a small enclosed space, and was far from favourably regarded, both because large open scenes were considered more romantic and because the small ones involved a set of movements slightly unfamiliar to the stage-hands.

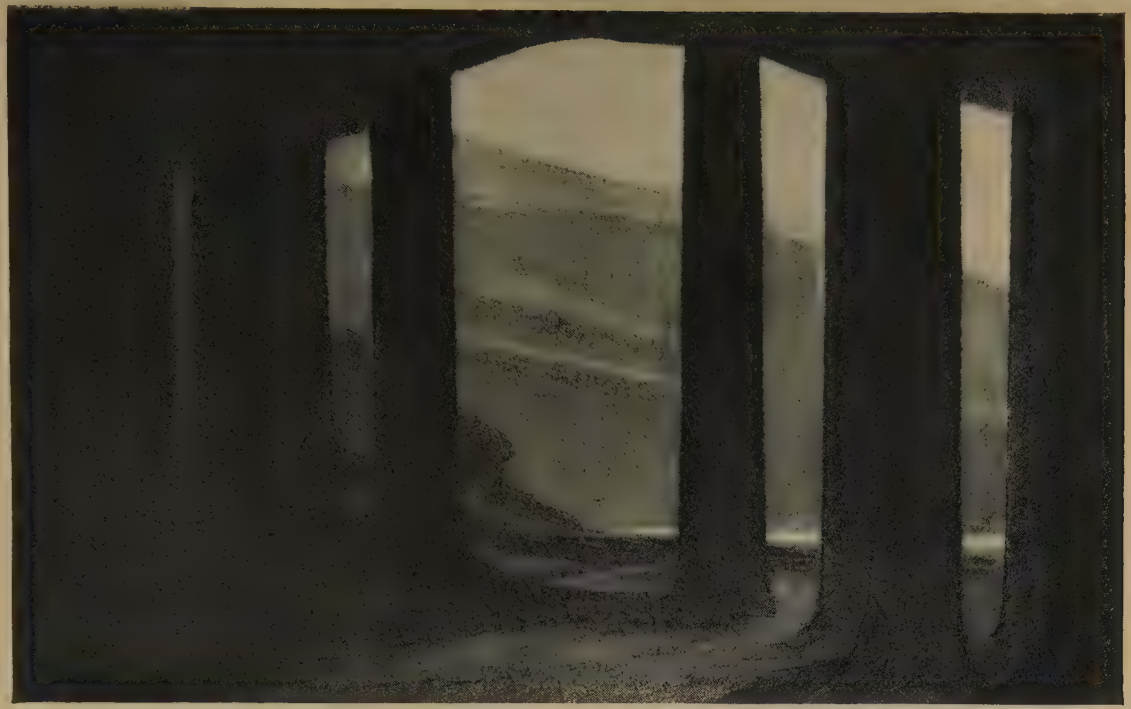
Some fifteen years ago the "set scene" became common in America, and, within its limits, was greatly improved. We now rarely see an old-fashioned "drop" scene, and have almost forgotten how absurd it looks. The "set" scene developed its own rules, and has produced some beautiful results. In its way the setting which Belasco gave to "The Return of Peter Grimm" has seldom been surpassed in America or in Europe. Partly under the stimulus of Belasco's undoubted originality American producers made a solid wall to look like a solid wall, a stairway to seem to be made of hard wood, the furniture believable, and the curtains, doors, and properties tolerable in taste and efficient in the creation of illusion. Indeed these producers often represented a hard wood stairway by a hardwood stairway, and went to much pains and expense to make their stage settings "like real life."

The stage settings of David Belasco may very well be taken to represent the point of departure of the European stage producers whose work this book will chiefly describe. They represent on the one hand an ideal of close imitation of life which was common in the theatre when the new generation began to make itself felt; on the other hand they represent the mechanical stage resources upon which the recent improvements have been built.

These stage resources some ten or twelve years ago were the usual set of "drops" from above, a clear stage with its set of trap-doors, etc., its footlights and cor-

responding border lights, both white and coloured, together with the usual spotlight apparatus, and a considerable skill in building solid-seeming "sets" with canvas stretched over wood frames, made not according to set rules, but with much flexibility and adaptation to the needs of the scene. Thus the prison scene in "Faust," or the exterior of Macbeth's castle, could be made in sections (of canvas over wood) and literally built, one section upon another. Ordinary walls would be made of "flats" especially constructed for the scene in hand, made in sections and lashed together behind by ropes. Trees were not merely painted on canvas, but built of wood and cork and supplied with appropriate foliage at considerable expense.

It is evident that there is no science required in all this beyond the adeptness of a carpenter and the ordinary cleverness of the general handy-man. But the last ten years have brought to the stages of Germany and Russia (and in smaller measure to those of America) highly trained mechanicians and long-needed mechanical inventions which are now permanently at the disposal of the drama. The revolving stage, permitting five or more complete sets to be built at once and changed in the space of a few seconds; the sliding stage, permitting one scene to be built on one-half of the stage while the other half is being used for the play; the rolling stage, by which any number of scenes can be set up more or less completely at leisure and quietly rolled before the proscenium when their turn comes; the gigantic sunken sliding stage which has been installed in the new Royal Theater at Dresden; the Fortuny Lighting system by which our former flat and unreal lighting is replaced with soft, reflected glows of real beauty; the new types of theatre architecture,



From "Die Musik und die Inscenierung." Bruckmann, Munich

"PARSIFAL"—ACT I. DESIGN BY ADOLPH APPIA

which are solving the question of the most appropriate and practical forms under particular conditions—all these are only a part of what applied science has begun to contribute to the art of the modern theatre.

It is hard for the layman to realise how far the "stage picture" of fifteen years ago was separated from the *picture*, in the artist's sense of the word. To the old producer any required set fell into a traditional classification—palace, drawing-room, forest, and so on—and was put together from the materials at hand in the store-room of every theatre, or ordered by number, so to speak, from the scene painter. A palace had a back-drop showing columns, panels, and stucco, an imposing set of stairs, perhaps, and an abundance of furniture of one sort or another, all embellished with coarse paints in gold, blue, green, yellow, purple, orange and white. A drawing-room had a back drop representing a highly decorated wall, with panels and stucco, canvas sides, innumerable doors and variegated furniture, the whole scene embellished with a similar colour scheme. A forest had a back drop representing a forest, side sets or drops, representing more of it, and perhaps in the foreground individual tree-trunks of canvas, the whole set in waving motion whenever the stage door was opened permitting the entrance of a breeze from the street; for purposes of "realism" some of the important tree-trunks were constructed of wood and cork, which thus emphasised the unreal nature of the rest of the scene. The colours of this scene were usually the one stroke of originality in it, since they were chiefly flat blues and ugly greens such as were never yet seen in a forest and were a pure effervescence of personality on the part of the scene-painter. If the producer made these sets roughly to imitate the thing

to be represented he was satisfied. This was the whole "art" of the old stage setting.

To the painter, of course, the art of picture making is something very different. Every artistic canvas is not merely a representation of nature—a room, a forest, or what not—but also a design within a limited space. The artist is never content merely to imitate what he sees—for anybody can go into a room or forest and see the thing itself. The artist sets himself to select these things in beautiful proportions, and place them beautifully within his oblong frame. An interior by Vermeer, for instance, is an arrangement of lines and masses, balancing or contrasting with one another, and of colours which harmonise, supplement, and contrast. The painter does not permit himself to take his subject in the way it first happens to hit his eye, nor to pile on his canvas any or all the colours of his palette just because they happen to be in the object painted. It is precisely in selecting out of the prodigality of nature or of his imagination the few simple elements which fit his present purpose, and in arranging these with great care upon his limited canvas, that he finds his greatest joy. Many a painter regards his canvas almost solely as an exercise in pure design or in colour.

The modern theatre has brought to its service painters who regard the stage picture as a picture in their own sense, who give to the design within the stage frame the same care in the placing of lines and masses, the selecting, harmonising and contrasting of colours, that they give to their canvases. Modern producers have begun to see that it is foolish for the theatre to plod along in its old way, when the immense art of the painter is waiting to be applied to its service to make its stage a thing of real beauty.

In the same way the stage set has been architectural in that it was made in three dimensions, using contrasting lines and solid masses, physical perspective, and so forth. Yet it made no use of the art of the architect, who knows how out of these materials to make a building not only useful and safe, but also beautiful. The stage space is necessarily an architectural design, good or bad. And the modern stage has brought to its service the art of the architect to make this design a beautiful one.

The stage has always made use of movement. The gestures of actors and the action of mobs have always been necessary parts of the conduct of a drama. But movement, besides being a realistic accessory of dramatic action, can be a thing of beauty in itself. The love scene in Romeo and Juliet, for instance, involves movements of the arms, head, and body. As we become familiar with this scene we begin to feel that these motions have a beauty of their own, apart from their immediate significance. Without in the least conceiving the scene as a symbolic dance, or anything of the sort, we come to see that the rise and fall of these movements, the rhythm of the bodies, the tensions and the relaxations, have a beauty of their own. Hedda Gabler, throwing the manuscript into the fireplace, is a posed figure. Exactly like Vemeer's interior, she is at once a representation of life and an exercise in pure design.

Now the art which has worked out the principles and beauties of human poses and movements is dancing. The drama necessarily uses the elements of the art of dancing in its work. Why not call upon the art of dancing to make its use of these elements beautiful? There is also much dancing, in the stricter sense, de-

manded in drama, and this can be made not only beautiful (which most of our theatre dancing is not), but also appropriate to the dramatic significance. There is also in the drama as a whole, or in its individual scenes, something of the rhythm and motion-design which it is not easy to put into words, but is felt by every one who has much to do with the theatre—the rise, climax, and fall of the plot, pulsations of emotional intensity, alternations in the tone of the lighting, and so on. These values can be regarded as problems in a sort of rhythmic motion, can be refined and directed, without in the least making of our "Hedda Gabler" a symbolic ballet. All these values, totally ignored by the old producer, can be used for beautiful results by applying, wisely and with discretion, something of the art or the instinct of dancing.

This is what the stage of the last ten years has begun to do. We have recently developed a new feeling for the dance. The Russian dancers from the Imperial Opera House in St. Petersburg, the various solo dancers, such as Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, and others, and many troupes of national dancers from various lands, have shown us something of the possibilities of dancing in expressing life. Folk-dancing, especially in England, has gained a new popularity, not as a fad, much less as an archæological study, but as one more instrument for the joy of life. Even "society dancing," which with the "Tango," the "Maxixe" and the rest, has become a craze in all large cities, is a genuine phenomenon of our reawakening sense of the beauty of rhythm. This joy in motion must necessarily be reflected in our drama, and the theatre has accordingly begun to draw into its service a feeling for the art of dancing at its best.

Just as the drama uses movements it also uses sounds. It is here that the culture, if not the art, of the musician has been called into its service. The tones of the speaking voice, the stage noises (thunder, rain, etc.), and of course incidental music in the strict sense, can be regarded not merely as necessary accessories to the conduct of the drama, but as sounds that can be organised into a beautiful whole. Again, without trying to make our drama a musician's symphony, we can approach it with something of the musician's instinct and see to it that the sounds which we must use shall be refined and harmonised into some relation with each other and with the whole. Our play of "Macbeth," for instance, can be made not only a representation of life, but also something of a pure design in tone.

In the case of the dancer and musician, of course, the application is by no means so literal and direct as in that of the painter and architect. Still it is very literally the fine arts of dancing and music which are being called into the service of the modern theatre to make all its rites beautiful in themselves and appropriate to their end.

The most obvious enrichment of the modern theatre has been in its literature. The good native play of thirty years or so ago has become so outmoded that the most uncritical provincial audience will laugh at much that used to pass for high dramatic art. The old play of the better sort—say of Bulwer-Lytton or of Dion Boucicault—was a strangely constricted affair. If its love pangs and poetic justice seemed thrilling happenings to the audience they were the merest routine of calculation on the part of the writers. It was necessary that the hero triumph and the villain be brought

to punishment if the piece was a "play," and that the hero suffer innocently and the villain triumph wickedly if it was a "tragedy." All plays were classifiable by tradition as comedy, romantic tragedy, comedy-drama, dialect comedy, society drama, and so on. They could almost be—and often literally were—ordered by number. The characters were even more strictly traditional. There was the first lead and the second lead, the female lead, the soubrette, the coloured lead, the villain, the adventuress, the Irish dialect comic, the Swedish dialect comic, and so on. An author was scarcely allowed to write a character unless it fell easily into one of the traditional rôles. We know now (after being painfully taught by some of the best brains of the age) how unreal all this stuff was. We can see that people never made love as the stage-folk did or triumphed over their enemies in the stage tone of voice.

The subject-matter of these plays, especially, seems to us now to have been strangely limited. It was supposed that men and women could act only from certain traditional motives; that under given conditions every person in the world would become amorous, revengeful, jealous, or what not. Love was the almost universal subject of the theatre, but only in its most superficial and unreal aspects. It used to be an axiom of the theatre that drama ceased when married life began. It was another axiom—or rather a religious tenet—that people went to the theatre "to escape from the realities of life." Indeed they did! All that made the life about us (or even the life of a previous age) real and thrilling, was banned from the theatre, "that last sanctuary of unreality."

Through Ibsen and those who felt his spirit all

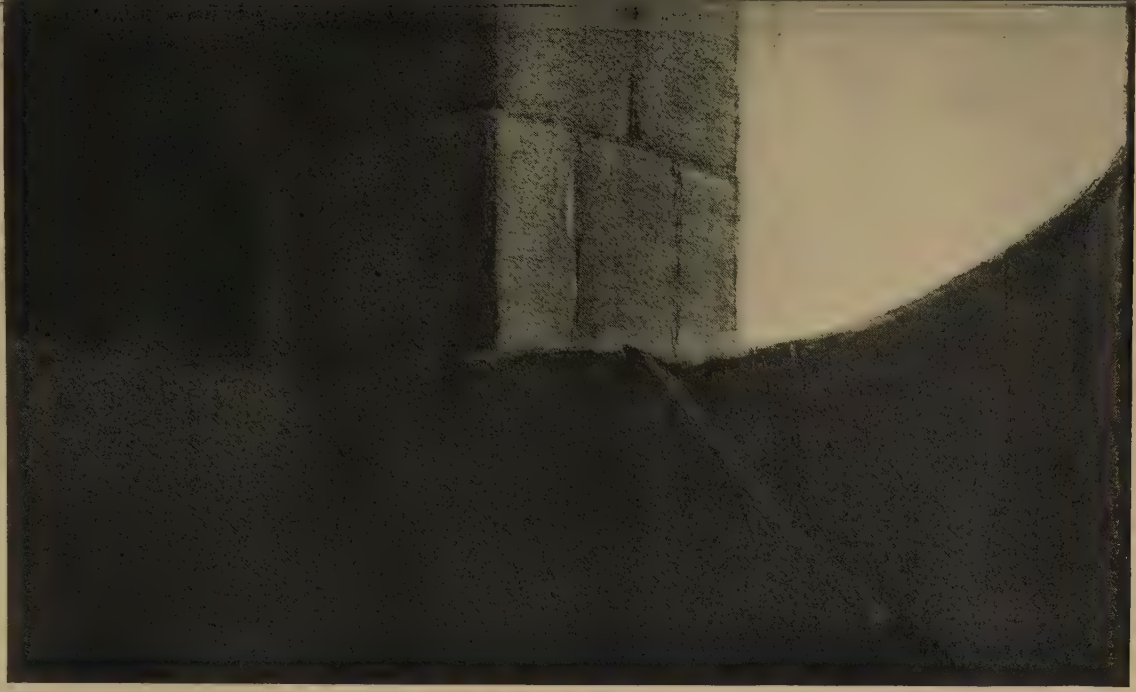
this was changed. Besides bringing something like the science of logic to the technical work of play construction, they widened its scope so that it could use as subject-matter almost anything that was of importance and dramatic interest in life. To get a suggestion of the range of modern drama we have only to recall the subject-matter of some of our most famous modern plays: the labour and capital struggle in "The Weavers" and "Strife"; parental authority in "Magda"; prostitution in "Mrs. Warren's Profession"; traditional religion in "Rosmersholm," "The Devil's Disciple" and a host of others; venereal disease in "Ghosts" and "Damaged Goods"; the psychology of repression in "Hedda Gabler"; the psychology of the modern business man in "Business is Business" and "The Lion and the Mouse"; the psychology of adolescence in "The Awakening of Spring"; feminine jealousy in "The Girl with the Green Eyes," and so on through hundreds of plays which have revealed to us the forces and meaning of our modern life.

And yet these realistic plays, which we think of first, are only a part of the riches of modern dramatic literature—a literature which is entirely the product of the last forty, and for the most part of the last twenty years. Within that time we have been given romantic dramas, such as "Cyrano," "L'Aiglon," "Francesca da Rimini," which are assured classics; the elaborate symbolism of the plays of Maeterlinck, opening up to us a whole new world of delicate temperamental states; the brilliant comedies of Shaw and Oscar Wilde, the fiercely vital Russian plays of Tolstoy, Andreieff, and Maxim Gorky; the tenderly cynical comedies of Schnitzler; the poetic dramas of many sorts represented by such works as Hauptmann's "The

Sunken Bell" and Karl Schönherr's "Faith and Fireside"; and a group of individual plays which are not to be classified, such as "Salomé," "Cæsar and Cleopatra," "Peter Pan," and many others.

And this extensiveness does not indicate yet the wide range of our modern drama. There is an intensiveness which is still more wonderful. For modern authors have been able to bring into their works a set of values —a thought-content as contrasted with the obvious life-content—which were hardly hinted at in any previous drama since the Greek. The abstract forces which run through our modern life—ideas of individualism, personal freedom, co-operation, compromise, and so on; philosophy of many kinds (in the strict sense)—determinism, free will, animism, life as the interaction of forces; experiments in the drama as an exercise in logic and pure design, as in Hervieu, or in the waking of delicate shades of temperament, as in Maeterlinck; the exploiting of popular ideas of religion and the supernatural; sincere attempts to reproduce the original values of the Greek and Elizabethan classics—this wide variety of subject and form has begun to reflect something like the height and breadth of contemporary life and thought.

So the theatre has brought to its service, in place of the rude mechanic writers of forty years ago, much of the best genius and literary ability of the age. It seemed in the early "Ibsenistic" years to be interested solely in the intellectual presentation of contemporary life by the realistic method, and this repelled much talent of the romantic and imaginative sort and kept the theatre still a kind of special cult. But the last ten years seem to have broken down any such exclusiveness. Imaginative and poetic drama is again beginning to



"Parsifal"—Act II. Design by Adolph Appia

have something like free play. There is a wide road open for experimentation in new forms and new subject-matter. It is hard to say whether realistic or romantic, verse or prose, modern or classical, "propagandistic" or "æsthetic" has the dominance in the theatre of to-day.

In short, modern drama includes, potentially if not actually, every style and genre, every sort of subject-matter, physical, spiritual and philosophic, and every kind of element which exists in the age and which must be contained and reflected in a mature art.

But theatre architecture has been a long way from such an ideal state as that foreshadowed by dramatic literature. All of us who are obliged to take cheap seats in the theatre have realised many times that most theatres of the old style are built in utter contempt of the man with a small income. One feels that the architect thought he was doing us a favour to let us in at all. Many seats in the ordinary "horseshoe" theatre make the stage partly or wholly invisible. Very frequently the back of the balconies is so ill ventilated that the evening is torture. The acoustics of such caves are often wretched.

This method of theatre building is both bad ethics and bad art. It prejudices the effect of the drama among the rank and file, whose approval the Greek tragedians held equal in value to that of the rich. To build theatres in which cheap seats are acoustically, optically, or hygienically bad is an insolence in a democratic age.

Professor Littmann, of Munich, is revolutionising Germany with a new style of theatre in which, he says: "There shall be no bad seats; there shall not even be any worse seats." His "amphitheatre" playhouse has

all its rows practically parallel with the proscenium and its floor rising at such an angle that every spectator can look clean over the head of his neighbour in front. The galleries, which are always excellent, are few and short. He is experimenting with many different problems, applying his principle to different demands and working out the formulæ for the maximum economy of space, of money, and of artistic effect, on a basis of "a good seat for every one." He is giving Germany a native democratic playhouse to replace its Italian aristocratic theatre.

At the same time the architects have constantly tried experiments in the large form of theatre for grand spectacles. These experiments go back somewhat to the Greek form, semicircular or even circular. The "Theatre of the Five Thousand" which is being built for Professor Max Reinhardt in Berlin, is such a structure. It must of course be kept for a certain sort of production which demands none of the "intimacy" of our modern realistic drama. In fact, the conditions are so different that we may expect a totally individual style of drama to develop under them. The spread of the idea will mean an enriching of our dramatic life.

There is much, also, to be hoped for the simple out-of-door theatre, to be developed either from experiments in the Greek style or from the local pageants which have become so popular in America and England.

But the most profound change of all is as yet only in germ. This change, if it really comes to pass, as conditions seem to indicate, will mean the complete democratisation of the theatre in its economic organisation. The theatre as we know it in America and England is almost entirely a commercial venture. We

can look for no spirit of experimentation from it, nor for any truly artistic impulse except so far as that is likely to pay dividends. Since it is a private business we have nothing to say about it; its directors can justly reply: "If you don't like what we offer, you can stay away."

The royal or municipal endowed theatre in Germany and France is only a modification of this commercial theatre. It is essentially the same in structure and in its relation to its audience, except that it can prosper on more modest returns. Without disparaging the fine democratic results of the endowed German theatres—their excellent, cheap and varied productions—we must remember that they are essentially the private aristocratic theatre adopting commercial methods in their operation. Admirable as their results often are, they are in general a bureaucratic rather than a democratic institution.

We should not think of criticising this bureaucratic theatre if our eyes had not been opened to something of far finer promise. The germ of this new form has been developed in two large stage societies in Berlin—the "New Free Folk Stage" and the "Schiller Theater." These, with a membership of many thousands each, aim to give good performances of their own at the lowest possible price. They have developed slowly from very modest beginnings and have created a system which in its physical magnitude and its social influence is immense. Besides maintaining excellent stock companies in theatres of their own, they have obtained low rates for their members at the best commercial theatres, and have established lectures, recitals and concerts unsurpassed in quality in Berlin. The members are largely workingmen who have built up the institutions with

their contributions of a few Pfennige at a time. Only a knowledge of the economic structure of these societies and of their marvellously varied programmes and high quality of acting can give an adequate notion of the essential soundness of the idea.

In this democratic organisation, when we look at it together with the forces operating in the theatre today, we may reasonably feel that we are seeing a type of the theatre of the future. Here we find none of the forcing of the market, none of the speculating and immense waste, which are the characteristics of the commercial theatre in America. The organisation is sound because it gives at cost price a good product for which there is a genuine demand. The effect of this organisation upon the audiences can hardly be too highly estimated; the members, feeling that they are paying their own bills and with their pennies are making a real sacrifice for an artistic article of real value, participate in the performances to a far greater extent than is possible where the rich and self-satisfied come to while away an evening. Art is no mere ornament to these working people; it is very closely bound up in their lives.

The economy and social utility of these organisations make the spread of them practically a matter of certainty. They offer the solution of many of the problems which are puzzling us in America. At the same time we do not deny certain limitations and dangers in their form or organisation. Such an institution can never rise much above the artistic capacity of its owning audience, and in America it would be a long time before we could hope for the brilliant results of the German experiments. A theatre on a large and democratic scale cannot be depended upon for radical

experiments (and there is no reason why such institutions should be expected to usurp the place of the private experimental theatre). In the third place, there is always the danger (though we believe it to be remote) of a sort of narrow mob censorship in such organisations. In a period of social stagnation or mental indifference the prejudices of such a body might counteract the best efforts of the wisest directors. It must be admitted that these dangers have not shown themselves seriously in the Berlin experiments, but if we are to get the best out of their lesson we must be equally open-minded toward their advantages and their defects.

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In Berlin these organisations grew up out of the labour unions and the proletarian unrest of the early nineties. In America it might be a different germ that would develop the institution. We cannot tell; we must look around, for no institution can be transplanted bodily into a different environment. But the germs of such growth certainly exist in America, and it is fair to believe that the economy and soundness of the idea will make headway against all opposition.

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The immensity of the institution of the theatre, if such an organisation as this or anything like it eventually supplants the present one, astonishes the imagination. Instead of a place of amusement to which the people go, the theatre becomes one of the great sacraments of life growing up in their midst. It entwines itself in their minds and spirits in a way we can hardly imagine at present. The *exterior fact* becomes an *inner force.* The best brains of the age, the most beautiful visions of the artist, become mingled with the people, from the top to the bottom of society, in their daily life. Probably no institution in the world, excepting only the

Christian church, will have had such a universal and personal power in moulding society. With a brilliance and force which the novel can never achieve it will show to men and women themselves and their age. It will bring the thoughts of the philosophers and the visions of the prophets into the homes of men, as Socrates brought philosophy out of the skies into the streets of Athens. All that is hidden, in the facts of life and the meaning of life, will be revealed, and all that is dumb in the souls of men and women will find joyous expression.

Nor need we fear that such an institution will become rigid and dogmatic, the instrument of powerful men for blinding vision and suppressing thought. The whole system is too vast and flexible; somewhere its audiences will demand self-expression, and the flame will spread. Nor will such an institution of the "mob" suppress the voice of the individual iconoclast or heretic. The artist is the last man in the world to be effectually gagged. It is only where an institution is under a central authority that such suppression is possible. The theatre of which we are dreaming will be a collection of independent interacting units. And if the individual voice is smothered in one part it will speak in another and wake the sleeping into new life. All the world can never be gagged at once, nor is all the world ever at one time asleep. Because men need to know themselves and their world they will always, in the long run, listen to the individual artist or thinker, providing that artist or thinker has a fit instrument to transmit his message. And this theatre of ours will be one of the most complete, flexible, and noble instruments ever conceived by man.

At least we can have this dream. The forces tend-

ing toward its realisation are many, those against it few. From all directions, from all departments of life, these influences seem to be concentrating toward a universal democratic institution which shall draw upon the best that men have yet achieved in all the arts.

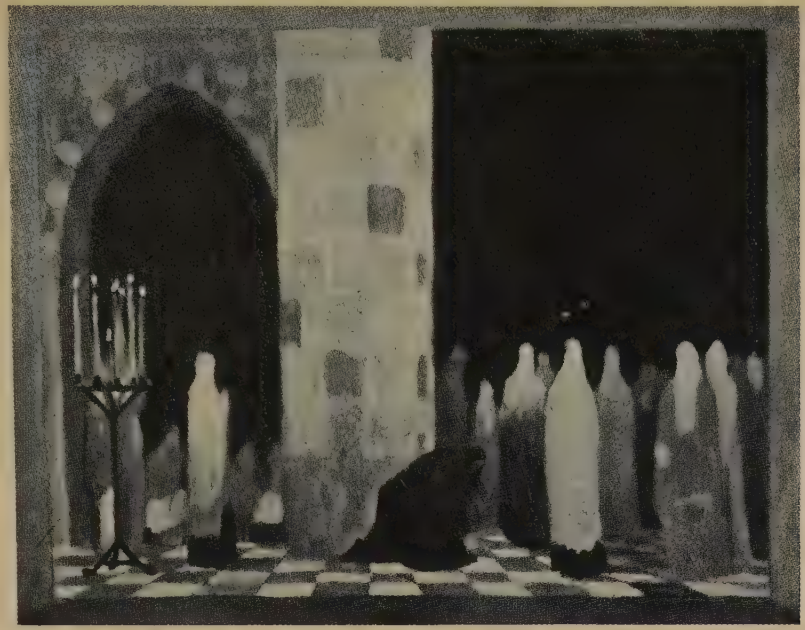
CHAPTER II

THE MECHANICAL FORCES: IMPROVEMENTS IN STAGE EQUIPMENT

THE last ten years have brought to the service of the theatre a new figure. His coming we can regard as symbolic. It stands to us as a sign that the theatre of the future can choose what it needs, instead of taking what it can get. The new figure is the worker in applied science. Adolph Linnebach, regisseur at the Court Theater in Dresden, entered the service of the Royal Opera House in Vienna as an expert mechanic. He had been educated as a marine engineer, but like all Germans he had mellowed his scientific life with an amateur interest in art; he made pictures and went often to the theatre. And while working professionally under the masterful Roller he saw his science and his art merging and becoming one thing.

It is this merging of science and art that we feel as we look inside many of the continental theatres. The stage equipment of twenty years ago was the handiwork of an amateur. Now it is beginning to represent the best skill of the scientist. And just as the clean, accurate brain of Mr. Linnebach is creating beauty in the theatre at Dresden, so the elaborate mechanical devices of many of the best German theatres are serving to create stage pictures more imaginative and lovely than we have ever seen before.

This coming of the scientist to the theatre is not



THE CATHEDRAL SCENE FROM "FAUST." DESIGN BY FRITZ ERLER
An example of inscenierung on the "relief stage" at the Munich Künstlertheater.

a mere conjunction; it is a real absorption by the theatre of what it needs. The playhouse is making the scientist its servant. The mechanical inventions which have been placed at the service of the theatre came because the theatre could not get along without them. We were tired of the clumsy pictures we had been seeing on the stage, tired of the flimsy and unreal settings; tired especially of the disillusioning waits, the gossip and the lights, that we must endure before we could live in the stage story once more. As the realistic plays, with their usual simple settings, began to be insufficient for our taste, the romantic type of play, with its many and elaborate scenes, began to make demands on the theatre which it could not fulfil. It was necessary to find some mechanical means of building elaborate scenes and changing them quickly and easily.

This demand is being met in the modern theatre by three stage devices—the revolving stage, the wagon stage, and the sliding stage. Along with these inventions have come a multitude of minor improvements, and, for the stage mechanic, a new sense of dignity.

The revolving stage or "Drehbühne" was invented some fifteen years ago by Lautenschläger, director of the Royal Theater in Munich. It has been gradually introduced into a large number of the German theatres and has been installed in the Century, the Little, and the Booth theatres in New York City, though in this country it has never been set to real work. It seems sure to grow in popularity and to become a necessary part of the modern playhouse, at least in a certain class of theatres.

The revolving stage is exactly what its name implies, and quite as simple in principle as the man in

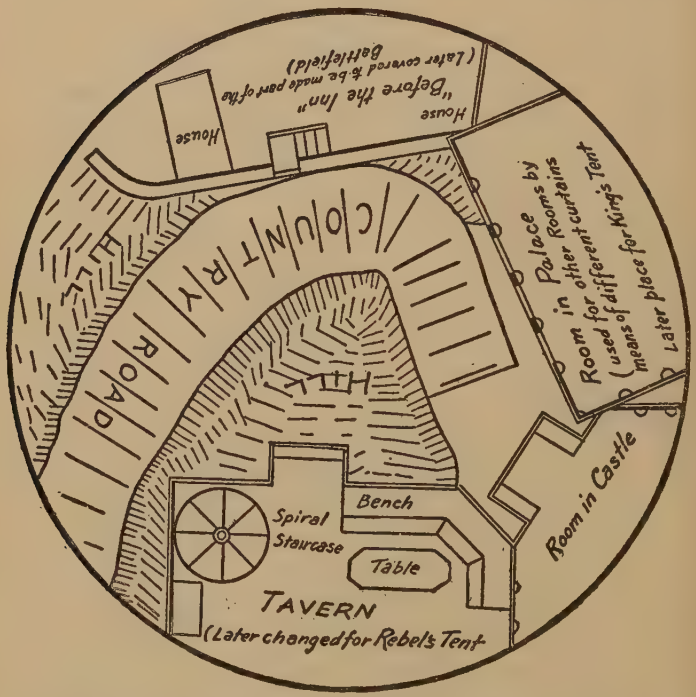
the street imagines. It is merely a circular portion of the whole stage, some forty feet or more in diameter, showing about a quarter of its circumference before the proscenium. It rests and revolves upon a heavy iron shaft, which must be sunk with great security into a concrete foundation, extending in some cases fifty feet below the stage level. Turning upon oiled ball-bearings it can be almost or absolutely noiseless, though this is far from being the case (or even an essential) in most of the theatres that now use it. It is usually operated by electric power, revolving leisurely but efficiently under the control of a central lever. It can also be revolved (and very frequently is) by hand.

The most famous of the revolving stages—that of Professor Max Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater in Berlin—may be taken as an example of all. This is capable of setting five (or even more) complete scenes at one time, so that half or all of a play can be performed with no more stage work than an occasional pressure on an electric throttle. The accompanying diagram shows the arrangement of the revolving stage for a Reinhardt performance of the first part of "Henry IV." Great flexibility is possible in the stage arrangements. The individual scenes need not be of any certain size. They can be quite tiny—sometimes as narrow as twelve or fourteen feet—if the proscenium arch be contracted by means of curtains. Or they can occupy the whole width of the proscenium and the depth of the whole stage. The battle scene in the present diagram, for instance, shows a hill which is built up over some of the other scenes (interiors) and is later extended to cover practically the whole circle of the stage. A street scene can show the street extending back between rows of houses, through the whole circumference, the houses be-

ing in reality the backs of other interior scenes of slighter depth.

On the whole the revolving stage involves no limitations on the form or size of the scene. But it does involve many limitations in the planning of the whole, and in this, perhaps, lies its greatest disadvantage. For the scenery must, in general, be planned so as to occupy the circle, and no more. If one scene is large, some other scene must be small. Two successive large scenes are impossible without a complete reconstruction of the stage-setting. The five sets must be planned nicely to occupy the circle and no more; the use of the revolving stage thus becomes something of a Chinese puzzle, which demands almost as much mechanical ingenuity as artistic sense. And this is not the worst. For the scenery, being planned for certain physical conditions in relation to other scenes and to the revolving stage, can in general be used only for the production for which it was originally designed. It is evident that the ordinary repertory theatre, which often gives as many as a hundred different plays and operas in a single season, cannot build special scenery for each. And if the producer uses the revolving stage he is liable to become the slave of his invention, which spends its master's money without conscience. In general the revolving stage, with all its convenience and artistic possibilities, is at its best only in the private repertory theatre in a large city (of which the Deutsches is the ideal example), which mounts but few plays a season and carries them profitably through long runs. Many of the best theatrical men in Germany are strenuously opposed to the revolving stage, refusing to introduce it into their theatres, and exposing its disadvantages at every opportunity.

At the same time their arguments are not as final as they sometimes seem. The fact is that with a certain sort of treatment the revolving stage can become

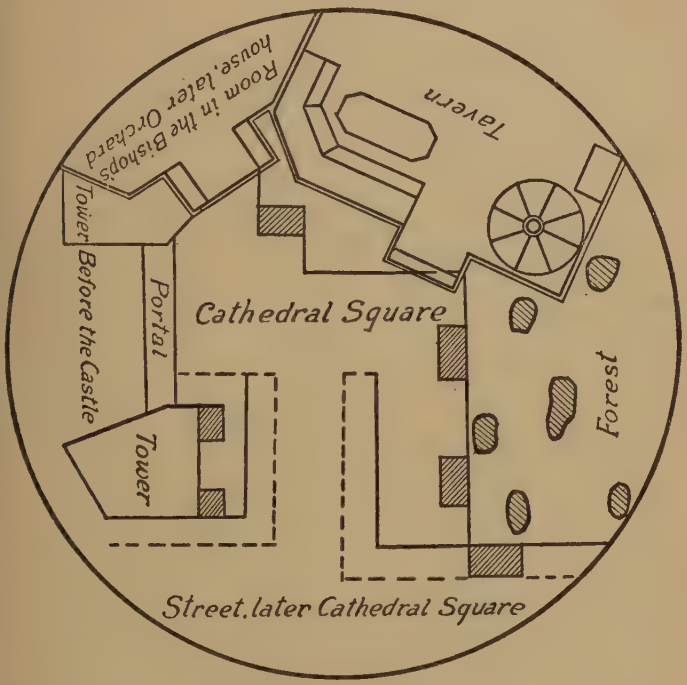


THE REVOLVING STAGE AT REINHARDT'S DEUTSCHES THEATER.

Arranged for "Henry IV," First Part. In the "long pause" the stage is partially reset, so that the "hill" is made to cover practically the whole space, being built over some of the rooms.

a docile servant, assisting when assistance is needed and keeping meekly out of the way when the producer wishes to do without it. The device need not always be used,

merely because it has been installed. Its existence does not prevent scenes being set in the ordinary way, since it is simply a circular part of the flat stage, without



THE REVOLVING STAGE IN REINHARDT'S DEUTSCHES THEATER.

Arranged for Henry IV, Second Part. In the "long pause" the stage is partially reset so that the "Cathedral Square" covers practically the whole stage.

obstacles or obstructions. It can be used, say, for one performance out of four, and be no bother in the other three. Further, the scenes do not have to be set absolutely within the circle. They can have hinged ex-

tensions which, when the scene is in place, can be flapped out toward the sides, to be flapped back within the circle when the scene is again to be changed. Or the stage can be used to set only the central part of the scene, the rest being built up in the ordinary way after the central part is in place. Thus the greater part of the labour of setting is saved, and the supplementary work can be kept very simple. In the third place, the revolving stage can be used in connection with the ordinary small rolling platform, or wagon stage, to be described later, the revolving stage carrying the heavier part of the scenery for the whole play, but supplemented by the other devices. In fact, it can be used as the sliding stage is—the later scenes being built on the rear part while an earlier scene is before the footlights. On the whole the revolving stage can hardly be a drawback for any American theatre, and with wise use can greatly increase its efficiency.

It only remains to state that the device can be installed on practically any stage, old or new, at a cost of some $10,000 or $15,000, and is absolutely without danger or uncertainty in its operation.

The simplest, most important, and most useful of all the modern German stage devices, is the Wagenbühne or wagon stage. The marvels that can be produced with this invention are out of all proportion to its cost. It can be introduced and used anywhere, has none of the disadvantages of the revolving stage, and is within the purse of the most modest producer.

The wagon stage, as used in Germany, is a platform two metres (a little more than two yards) in width by four in length, placed on noiseless rubber wheels. It costs some $50. Ten or twelve of these platforms

will mount the most elaborate play with the simplicity and almost with the speed of the revolving stage.

In the German repertory theatres the scenery for the evening performance is set up on the wagon stages in the course of the afternoon, and is rolled before the proscenium and fitted together when the time comes. The scenery can be set so as to hide the side of the wagon. In the simple scene there is nothing to do but to roll the wagon in place, and to add the few stage "properties" which German taste permits. Even an elaborate scene can be set up (though not entirely without noise) in less than a minute.

The practical use of the wagon stage involves many tricks of the trade. For instance one wagon can be used for two or more scenes, by making use of both of its sides. By this means a recent production of "Julius Cæsar" in Frankfurt-am-Main was realised with but three wagons (plus some curtains for the tent scene and a few simple properties for the battle). Wagons can be used singly, or clamped together to form a larger wagon. Lack of stage space sometimes prohibits the use of many large wagons waiting for their turn, and in general economy demands the use of single wagons that can be reset in the course of the performance. To some extent, to be sure, scenery for a wagon stage must be made to fit the standard size, and so might be under the disadvantages of the revolving stage. But the wagon stage makes no demands of its own, being simply a movable floor, and by the combination of several wagons a larger movable stage can be created which will receive the stock scenery as it is. Further, of course, the wagon stage does not comprise the whole of the stage set. It is used to set only the principal and heavier parts of the scene, the side walls and minor

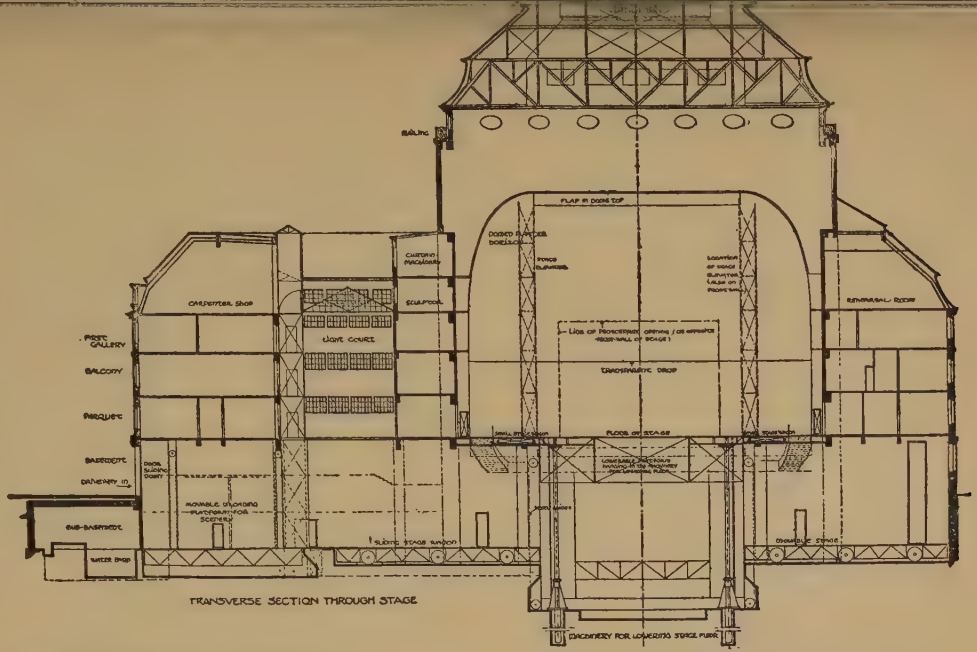
parts then being set in place by hand. On the whole the flexibility and general usefulness of the wagon stage make it invaluable if it is used with resourcefulness and wisdom according to the peculiarities and demands of each problem.

A more elaborate and limited type of stage is that called the Schiebebühne, or sliding stage, invented by Brahm, head mechanical inspector at the Royal Theatre in Berlin. It might be called a large double wagon stage, sufficient to occupy the whole "stage space," and capable of being slid either to left or to right, so that one-half of it can be used for setting a scene while the other half is used for the performance. The expense of installation is rather heavy, and the nature of the invention demands a prodigality of space behind the scenes which many theatres have not at their disposal. For besides requiring, at each side of the stage proper, a free space equal to that of the stage itself, the device involves the use of a large supplementary space in the rear for the storing of scenery, the side spaces being naturally useless for the purpose. But if these conditions can be met the invention is one of the best. It makes possible the rapid succession of large and elaborate scenes such as cannot be thought of with the revolving stage. It has practically no physical limitations and can receive any sort or shape of scenery. It is generally used, of course, in connection with movable wagons, which are stored at the back and rolled on to the stage as needed. Perhaps, so used, it offers no especial advantages over the simple wagon stage, but there may always come an unusually elaborate scene which wagons alone would be unable to compass in a short space of time.

On the whole, however, the sliding stage is a mere

THE CELLAR SCENE FROM HEBBEL'S "GENOVEVA," DRESDEN COURT THEATRE
DESIGN BY ADOLPH LINNEBACH

This scene was set up in a few seconds almost entirely on wagon stages.



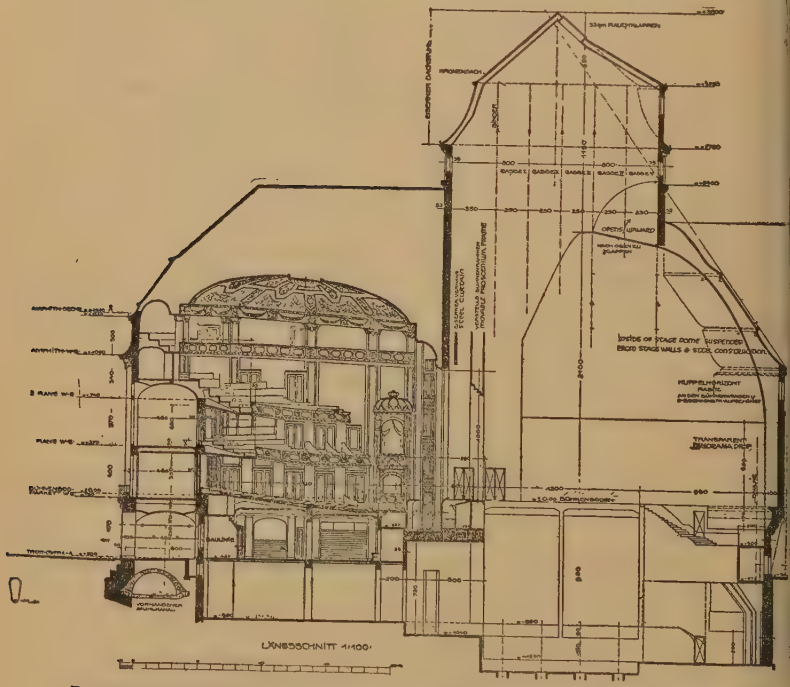
Lossow and Kühne, Architects. From "The Architectural Review."

TRANSVERSE SECTION THROUGH STAGE OF THE NEW COURT THEATRE IN DRESDEN.

This drawing and the others in this book from "The Architectural Review," are taken by permission from the issue of November, 1913, accompanying Mr. J. E. O. Pridmore's excellent article on "The Mechanical Development of the Modern German Stage."

luxury, and no theatre can excuse itself for ugly or old-fashioned settings merely because it lacks the money for this device.

A desire to enjoy the advantages of the sliding stage



Lossow and Kühne, Architects. From "The Architectural Review."
LONGITUDINAL SECTION OF THE NEW COURT THEATRE IN DRESDEN.

where only a limited stage space was available led to the construction of one of the most elaborate and expensive stages in Germany (or in the world, for that matter) in the new Royal Theatre at Dresden. This is a sliding stage that does its sliding, so to speak, in the basement. The main stage, after the end of the

scene, is sunk to a distance of ten metres, then the scene, in one or two sections, is slid off to one side, while the new scene, which has been prepared in the meantime at the other side, is slid on in its place. The whole is then raised to its former position and the play proceeds.

The accompanying diagrams should make clear the complicated structure of this stage. The amount of ground space available for the stage itself was but little larger than the stage proper (which is eighteen metres square), because of the street which circles in closely behind it. But the space under the street was entirely available. Here, then, Mr. Linnebach made his side receptories for the sliding scene, together with innumerable store-rooms and working spaces. Further, the air above the stage was at his disposal. So he raised the stage section of the building to a height of more than a hundred feet, and built here, at the sides of the stage space, over the corridors, and in nooks and crannies, the many dressing-rooms, rehearsal-rooms, work-rooms, and even a restaurant, which go to make this theatre one of the most complete in Europe.

It is interesting to reflect how much like a complete city the large modern theatre is. Besides the board and lodging, so to speak, which is abundantly supplied, the Dresden theatre has within its walls all its own power. Many such an institution depends on the city water for its power. But city water supplies are notoriously unreliable, and Mr. Linnebach did not propose that his theatre should delay a performance just because the ordinary kitchen sinks of Dresden were dry. So the stage is operated (in its vertical motion) by its own water-power. Four connected tanks in the basement receive the water that is pumped into them, by

power from an electric dynamo, from a small reservoir of twelve cubic metres' capacity, the dynamo, in turn, being operated by a small steam engine. Each of the three main sections of the stage proper rests upon two huge steel shafts which are sunk in iron tubes resting in concrete which is based to a depth of sixteen metres. Into the iron tubes, under the control of a central lever, rushes the water, under a pressure of some thirty-two "atmospheres," displacing the steel shafts and forcing the stage up to the desired level. The tanks serve as an air "cushion," somewhat as in an ordinary steam fire-engine. It is claimed that in all this there is not the slightest danger of accident or failure, as every part of the apparatus is tested to many times its required strain, and the maximum and minimum pressures are automatically and securely controlled.

The horizontal motion, unlike the vertical motion, is operated by electricity. Each of the two front sections of the stage has a pair of rolling stages, practically the size of the sections on which they rest, which function much like an ordinary wagon stage. But they are propelled by means of motors placed within them and controlled from a central station through a trailing wire. To simplify the mechanism the actual guiding of these rolling stages is managed by hand. The third and rear section of the stage proper is not supplied with the supplementary wagons nor with the side spaces, since it is used only in very deep scenes, such as occur but rarely in a play, and the work of scene-setting upon this section can be done behind the scenes in the course of the evening. The various sections can be operated together or separately, and can be raised at will to any height, up to two metres, above the ordinary stage level.

This whole system, again, is used in connection with the ordinary wagon stage, which in the old Dresden Royal Theatre has produced such marvels under Mr. Linnebach's technical and artistic direction. The whole play is set up on wagons in the course of the afternoon, and the various sets are rolled on to the sliding stages during the scene just preceding that in which they are needed. Since the underground extensions give the director plenty of space for storing wagons already set, the actual work of setting in the evening is much simpler than it would be in a constricted theatre in which many scenes must be set up and taken down in the course of the performance. On this account a full third of the ordinary force of stage hands can be permanently dispensed with. The whole system, in fact, instead of being costly as might be supposed, is comparatively inexpensive in operation. The water-power is a slight factor, since it involves nothing but the operation of an ordinary electric dynamo. The motors for the sliding stages merely use up some of the by-product of the regular electric power which must be furnished to the house for ordinary lighting purposes. The original cost of installation, of course, is large (the whole theatre cost $1,500,000), but such a theatre is built to last a great many years, its financial future is assured as it would never be to a commercial American theatre, and the prestige of a first class playhouse is a commercially valuable article which the kingdom and citizens of Saxony are abundantly willing to pay for. It may be added that the price of seats ranges from about a dollar down, and that the elaborate equipment of the playhouse is not a mere snobbish fad.

In such a theatre, where the genius of the expert mechanician seems to become most elaborate and com-

plex, it might be thought that the horse would ride the man. But its complexity is simply the high development of simple principles. All details are under central control. Everything in regard to the mechanical movements of the stage and the complex lighting system is directed from a single central station. This station, presided over by a mechanical expert who is at the same time an artist, is the executive office of the directing artist, who is Mr. Linnebach himself—trained artist and expert mechanic in one. And all the complex machinery of execution, down to its smallest details, is accurately managed through the personal responsibility of intelligent workmen. If in the past we have been afraid to increase the mechanical complexity of our stages it is because we had no confidence in our ability to train responsible workmen to operate them. Yet mere complexity does not imply rough or imperfect operation; our most highly organised factories and business concerns are the smoothest and most accurate in their operation. And there is no reason why the theatre, when it comes in need of the genius of the scientific expert and organiser, should not be developed to any needed point of mechanical complexity.

The "sky-drops" or strips of white canvas that used so pitifully to represent the throne of God, have been replaced in the modern theatre by an invention that makes a natural landscape possible. This is the "Horizont," which we may name for the purpose a cyclorama.

For convenience we may group all forms of the cyclorama under two names—the Rundhorizont and the Kuppelhorizont. The Rundhorizont is a white or tinted backing for the stage, built in the form of a segment of a vertical cylinder. It may be constructed of canvas

or of solid plaster. In the older theatres the canvas Rundhorizont, built on a rigid frame, used to be let down from above. Now, if made of canvas, it is more usually kept, when not in use, on a vertical roller, at one side of the stage, near the front, and carried around behind the stage, unrolling from its cylinder the while, until it connects with a similar cylinder at the opposite side of the stage. It hangs from a circular iron rail, and almost completely encloses the stage, rising to the required distance, usually some twelve metres. It can be rolled up on its original cylinder when it is not needed, leaving the stage once more approachable from all sides. The Rundhorizont can also be built permanently of plaster over an iron frame. This does away with any flapping or unevenness in the "sky," and usually proves more satisfactory for taking coloured lights. Contrary to one's supposition, this permanent enclosure of the stage does not greatly interfere with the entrances and exits, and no producer hesitates a moment to install it when he has the money.

The chief uses of the cyclorama are evident. It presents a continuous dead white or tinted background, which, when played upon by the proper lights, gives a striking illusion of depth and luminous atmosphere. Under the old method the strips of canvas were painfully evident as such; their surface flapped and their edges outlined themselves against other drops. It was at best a conventional symbol to designate sky; it made any other attempts at realism in the settings absolutely fruitless. It was usually painted a flat "sky colour" and would not "take" the lights which were played upon it from time to time. The flapping of the old canvas drops is sometimes evident in the canvas cyclorama, which is, in the modern theatre, usually regarded

as a makeshift. The solid plaster cyclorama presents none of the drawbacks of canvas, and under a sensitive use of lights belies its solid construction altogether.

The ordinary plaster cyclorama, however, has the one drawback that its top can usually be seen by the spectators from the front of the ground floor. This fact has led to an extension of the device—the "Kuppel-horizont," or dome cyclorama. This is simply the solid cyclorama domed out four or five metres over the stage. It has the advantage, besides that of its edges being invisible to the audience, of serving as a great hollow reflector and diffuser of light, whose utility will be made plain farther on.

The cyclorama is a neutral background on which many subtle and highly varied effects can be produced. Exact shades of colour, when thrown on it by the modern lighting devices, show their true values because of the dead whiteness of the surface. Moving clouds can be shown on it by means of a sort of moving picture machine. Its presence, too, often greatly simplifies the problem of stage-setting. With it there is no longer any need for masking the wings and top with special canvas in order to cut off the scene from the stage-wings beyond. Such a set as that of the desert scene of "Cæsar and Cleopatra," or that of the mountain top in Goethe's "Faust," can show the one physical object called for, and the infinite open sky around. Nor are such poetic effects confined only to special scenes. In general the cyclorama permits a simplicity in the setting of the sides of the stage which is coming more and more to be demanded by modern taste.

But perhaps the chief value of the cyclorama, from the standpoint of the stage artist, has not yet been mentioned. For the new device changes altogether the

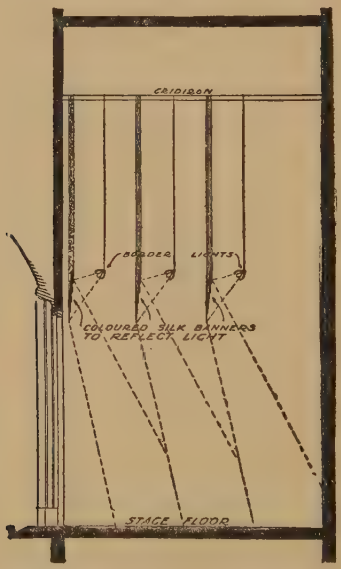
"Tales of Hoffmann"—Act III. Design by Josef Urban
Showing the framed stage-picture and conventional proscenium.

problem of lighting. Ordinary sunlight is, as we know, not a direct light, but an infinitely reflected light, bandied about by the particles of air and by the ordinary physical objects on which it strikes. The mellowness and internal luminosity of ordinary sunlight is wholly due to this infinite reflection. It was the lack of this that made the old stage lighting, with its blazing direct artificial glare, so unreal. The cyclorama, and especially the dome cyclorama, permits the stage to be lighted largely or wholly by crisscrossing reflection. The mellow and subtle lighting which it makes possible was altogether unknown under the old methods.

Perhaps the most important single factor in the modern stage is the lighting. Some producers say that lighting is nine-tenths of the problem. Certainly every artistic stage in Europe has made a new study of lighting and has completely changed its technical equipment and, correspondingly, its artistic ideals. Fortuny lighting, now in vogue in some form or other in most of the good European theatres, has revolutionised both the kind of light used and the methods of using it. It substitutes for the ordinary incandescent, or Tungsten, lamps of our foot and proscenium lights a set of arc-lamps sometimes capable of being moved freely. The incandescent lamp, which throws a distinctly yellow light, has the quality of overemphasizing the red and yellow in the colours which it illuminates, and thus materially altering the colour values. The Tungsten lamp is much better, but is still not a pure white. The arc-light, being of a slightly bluish tinge but much more nearly white, is comparatively just to all colours.

In operation the Fortuny systems have a range and flexibility which makes lighting the chief technical revolution in the contemporary theatre. Briefly, this

operation is that of reflected light instead of direct light. Instead of lighting the stage with incandescent bulbs of one or another crude colour the Fortuny method throws its brilliant illumination away from the stage against bands of coloured silk which reflect the



From "The Architectural Review."

OPERATION OF THE FORTUNY INDIRECT LIGHTING SYSTEM.

light in any colour or tint desired, either on the whole stage or upon a desired part. Sometimes the light is thrown mainly against the cyclorama, which reflects it a second time, and (especially in the case of the Kuppel-horizont) crisscrosses it into a soft diffusion. This alone is sufficient to change stage lighting from disillusion into illusion. The whole apparatus is under the

control of one man, who, like most of the mechanics of the modern art theatre, must himself be an artist. The modern theatre must be able to throw any sort of light from any direction on to any part of the stage. But though this demand, and the mechanism by which it is met, seem complicated, the whole system is in reality economical, since one man can operate one lamp, and a few lamps will accomplish what formerly required hundreds of bulbs and a complex system of wiring. In fact, the system is rather the contrary of complex in the mechanical sense. It requires, on the other hand, more intelligence and artistry. It has simply become more human.

The actual work of scene-building has also become more of an expert's job than formerly. But this is rather the affair of the artist than that of the scientist. It can be said, however, that stage carpentry is a dignified specialised profession in itself, and involves much mechanical ability in the accurate execution of the designer's demands. The problem of building an elaborate scene which will not fall down is not so far removed from that of building an elaborate house that will not fall down. Modern scenery, which must be light, simple, and accurately made, and yet secure and tough, is not to be manufactured by a mere handy man.

Much of the scientist's knowledge, too, is demanded for the understanding of colours and lights, paints and perspective, in their optical operation under given stage conditions. Certain modern producers have brought something approaching a science of colour to their work. And there are few functions in the modern theatre which do not require something of the scientist's attitude—the study of the external facts of nature as such, an intellectual understanding of cause and effect

in all parts of their work, and a willingness to approach each difficulty as a peculiar and unique problem.

While the equipment of the modern stage has been growing more mechanical and complex, the operation of it, as has been suggested, has been growing more human and personal. The "light man," for instance, in a modern German theatre, is not provided with the old-fashioned "light-plot," which showed accurately each light and each combination to be used in the course of the whole play, with his "cues" written out and his very levers numbered. The "light-plot" reduced the whole artistic problem of lighting to an unintelligent mechanical formula—and the result showed it. The light-man to-day lives through the rehearsals as one of the artistic personnel, receiving his orders or suggestions from the regisseur just as an actor would, and, like the actor, remembering them and executing them in the actual performance without mechanical aids. He has been drawn into the ensemble as a person, depending on his artistic sense, his memory, and his responsibility toward the whole. And he has become not less reliable, but more.

And so it is, in general, with all the mechanical functions of the modern stage. They are invented by men for an artistic purpose, and used by men. They have not, like the legendary iron man, enslaved the person who made them. For the relation of the mechanical personnel to the artistic result is a personal artistic relation. The mechanical development of the stage has meant not the mechanicalising of the stage, but the humanising of it.

CHAPTER III

THE ARTISTIC FORCES: THE STAGE-SETTING, OR "INSCENIERUNG."

FOR this chapter we must coin a new word. There is no English word to convey the idea of stage-setting in the modern sense. The German attitude toward stage-setting has given the German word for it a distinct meaning—a meaning which must be associated with the new art as it spreads around the world. The corresponding word in England and America is lacking because the corresponding fact is lacking in the theatres of England and America. So it is not from affectation but from necessity that we shall speak of modern stage-setting as "Inscenierung."

"Inscenierung" comprises the whole process of putting a play upon the stage—the acting, scene-designing, lighting, and so on—and the harmonising of these factors to express the particular quality of the play produced. If in the following pages the word "Inscenierung" may be used somewhat more narrowly to signify the mere setting as apart from the action, it will be only with the implication that this setting is an organic part of the play as a whole. No other country (except for a few theatres in Russia) has taken such an attitude toward stage-setting as Germany. The Germans have created the fact; they have a right to the name.

For several reasons the stage-setting of the nineties became unsatisfactory to theatre-goers and theatri-

cal producers. These settings rigidly followed the ideal which was thought to be implied in the Ibsen dramas and the later realistic plays—that of reproducing nature, of reproducing on the stage "a real room with the fourth wall left out." This ideal had done fine service. It had cleared the stage of a mass of useless properties, had replaced the silly superfluity of conventional adornment with something of the bareness or of the irregularity of life, had placed two doors where six had flourished before, had put in the scene a chair where the play called for a chair.

All stage-setting previously had been, like the plays themselves, conventionally put together by clumsy men-of-the-stage. The realistic drama said "We must show life as it is," and the idea became something like a religion to thousands of workers in the theatre. After a struggle, the bitterness of which we cannot realise now, the idea triumphed, and all theatres which pretended to stand for the best in drama strove to reproduce the physical semblance of life down to its tiniest detail.

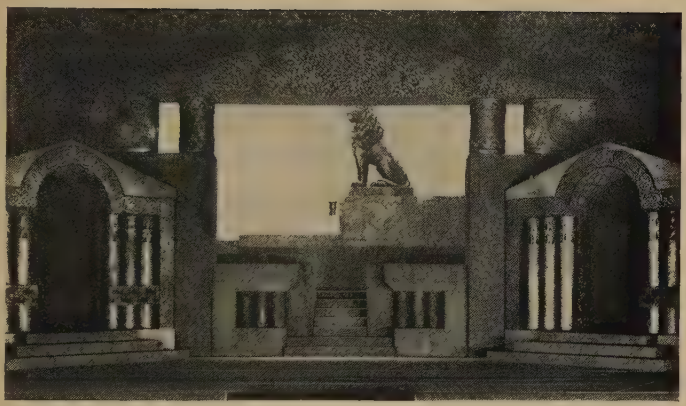
But when realism had achieved three walls in all accuracy what was to be done? It could not stand still. It must go on logically and put in the fourth wall, or adopt a new ideal—and this ideal was supplied by a striving for a certain sort of simplicity. Why exercise artistic selection in one part of the drama—the action—and not in another—the setting? After all its simplification the stage-setting remained too elaborate. Two doors and half a dozen chairs were too many. Out of the complexity of external facts people wanted to deduce something of the simplicity of their inner meanings. "Give us the really important, significant facts," they seemed to say, "and let the rest go."

But there were also technical reasons, perhaps still

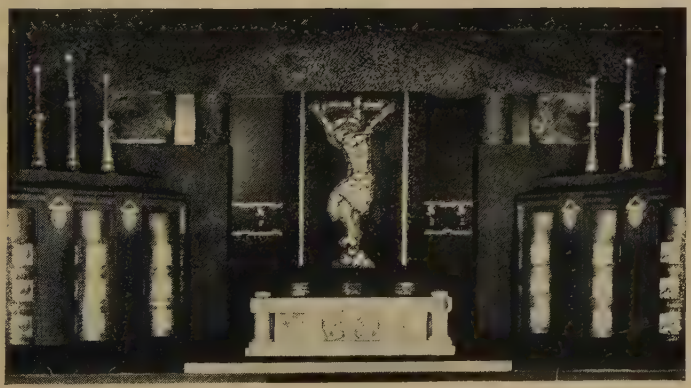
more influential, why the old realistic setting was unsatisfactory. A landscape or an interior was painted to give the illusion of life. This was sometimes achieved to a remarkable extent. But the moment the actor came on the stage one saw the unreality of the setting against the living presence of the man. Instead of illusion the process became one of persistent disillusionment. This continual evidence that the scene was pretending to be what it was not made its failure the more depressing. A purely conventional setting would have been less unreal.

Still more the old stage setting was unreal because of the technical difficulties of perspective. Perspective and distance cannot (at least out-of-door scenes) be reproduced; they can only be suggested. To represent distance the scene painter had made use of converging lines according to the ordinary pictorial laws of perspective. But for several reasons this back perspective looks utterly unreal in the presence of the living actor. For instance, the back curtain usually represents the scene as being on a level with the spectator; but when the spectator is above the actor, even slightly, he looks at the living scene from quite another angle than that with which he seems to be looking at the painted scene. Certain exaggerations necessary to stage perspective become evident as the actor moves backward and forward and establishes varying perspective relations with the back drop. Still worse, the back drop was usually lighted with the same light as was used for the actors; that is, the light quite evidently did not undergo the variations of distance, and bore evidence to the fact that all was close to the audience. Most important of all, the "back drops" were very obviously painted on cloth, and none too well painted either.

Mr. Kenneth Macgowan, one of the most spirited of the younger American dramatic critics, has explained the anomaly of stage perspective as follows: "There are two sorts of stage perspective. Both fail. One is in the side walls of rooms or the exteriors of buildings on the sides of the stage. The artist scales down the height at the back to give an effect of greater length toward the rear. Of course the effect fails the moment a man, who reaches half way to the ceiling when he stands down stage, walks back. For the ceiling comes down to meet him, and lo, he is a cubit greater in stature, if we measure him by his environment. The other kind of perspective is in the back drop—a landscape or a vista of houses. It fails not because of the proximity of actors; skilful lighting can make it seem to be a good way off. The failure is purely a mechanical matter of the eye. The presentation cannot be made to counterfeit nature. When the eye looks at real things of varying distances, the lens in the eye expands or contracts to change the focus to suit the distance. The two eyes also shift positions in the sockets so as to triangulate to the spot looked at. Now when the eye is focusing on a piece of canvas thirty feet off—as it must, to see clearly—or when the two eyes are centring their lines of vision on the same point that distance away, there is an automatic report to the brain of the nearness of the object. Moreover, as the eyes move from a mountain peak on the back drop to the painted foreground there is no readjustment of the positions of lenses and eyes. There would be a great one in nature. Naturally the effect of flatness is still further increased. This can be overcome, I think, only by the presentation of distance so hazily that the eye hardly tries to focus, but merely takes an impression."



"L'Amore Dei Tre Re"—Act I. Design by Josef Urban



"L'Amore Dei Tre Re"—Act III. Design by Josef Urban

As produced at the Boston Opera House, showing the "skeleton set" around which was built the scenery for all the acts.

This tendency away from the precise and literal is not a fad of preciosity, but rather a movement toward democracy. For the old perspective stage, as we have seen, could be illusory only when viewed from one point in the auditorium—in the old theatres, the king's box. The impressionistic setting is equally valid from whatever point it is viewed. Thus the artistic impulse is putting itself at the service of men.

In addition to the anomalies of perspective, one finds that a realistic setting usually dissipates the attention. An interior scene, with all its very natural doors and tables and chairs, invites us to examine it—to look with equal interest at all parts of the stage. But obviously a play, since it is a selected action, must be seen with the attention centred on the important. This psychological demand becomes insistent as the novelty of strict realism wears off, and, once the spectator has felt the thrill of a setting which actively draws his attention toward the important, it never departs.

One more condition, a dramatic one, made a change necessary. Realism as applied to an elaborate play, say one of Shakespeare's, demanded much time between scenes for building the setting. These waits, sometimes of ten minutes for a five-minute scene, not only tired the spectator, but destroyed the dramatic continuity. A "Macbeth," which pulses on from scene into scene, should not be brought to a dead stop, filled with lights and gossip, whenever the situation changes. Many modern plays, too, like those of Tolstoy, ask for frequent changes of scene. And one finds that with all these works it is profitable to sacrifice elaborateness of the setting for continuity of the play. It is true that with the more recent stage inventions producers might

give a Shakespearian play with short waits and still with something like old time elaboration in the settings, but it is to be noticed that now that producers have seen the beauty and dramatic fitness of the simpler settings, they don't want to.

Out of these conditions and dissatisfactions there arises a man, new to the theatre, symbolic of its altered nature—the regisseur. The older theatre had appointed men to be responsible for the various parts of the drama; the regisseur is to be responsible for their harmony. But this is not enough, for one cannot harmonise parts that weren't made to harmonise. The regisseur must not only be responsible for the assembling of the parts; he must be responsible for their designing and making from the beginning. So the regisseur becomes the autocrat of the modern theater, caring for the design and equipment of his playhouse, planning and supervising the construction of his scenes and costumes, working out the technical details of scene shifting and building, determining the nature and even the details of the acting, and imagining the lights and all their variations, even down to the spotting of a certain part of a certain actor's robe at a certain point in his part. The regisseur, in short, is responsible for *the whole*. And the fact that he was never needed before the twentieth century (excepting perhaps in ancient Greece) is proof that the drama has become what it never was before.

As we look into the European theatres to-day we are never in a moment's doubt whether the stage settings are "old" or "new." The new have "a something" about them which arrests our attention and stimulates our interest. We are puzzled to know just where it is. It is not in the externals, for the setting may consist of

walls and tables and chairs, just as in our American theatres (only better done). But there is something in the arrangement and ordering of it all which gives us at once stimulation and repose. It is *purpose*. The new settings are designed with some artistic end in view. We find our eye centring on this or that spot, while the other parts contrast with it and lead up to it. In short we feel, what we never felt with the old settings, that we are in the presence of an artist.

There is never too much in these settings, and what there is is artistically as well as dramatically necessary. They suggest reality, rather than represent it; and when our imagination is thus stimulated we make reality real because, in a sense, we create it ourselves. Bare walls, simple lines, harmonious colours, soft lights—these are part of the new stage settings. One never feels that the scene screams at the top of its voice. A modern interior is a real room, not a fantastic or precious one; but its doors and windows, tables and chairs are part of a picture placed within the proscenium frame. The inscenierung of a classical play, say by Shakespeare or Goethe, will catch the spirit of its milieu; if its action passes in a castle, it will make use of the romantic opportunities of the old grey stone, the mysterious arches, the creeping stairways. A landscape in modern inscenierung is not a paper and canvas copy of leaves and grass and shrubbery, but the picture of that landscape, the leaves forming a dark mass, the road a cleft of white in the greenery, and the shrubbery a mass of dark at the side. The colours are attuned to each other, and the lines and masses group themselves around some central point. The background is a real solid, not a flimsy panel; it is real distance, not a flapping sky curtain. The foot-

lights (if they are used at all) do not glare and force the actors to use exaggerated make-up. Light and shade are not painted on canvas but are the living consequences of a real light. And the central secret of it all is artistic selection—the using only of what is necessary and that with a definite purpose.

Suppose you are sitting in a darkened auditorium; you look into the proscenium opening and see all blackness, except here, at one side of the foreground, a noble pier belonging to the nave of some German Cathedral. The pier is of yellow grey stone, built to support huge weight and dignity. About it are many niches, decorated with delicate tracery, and within the niches are statues of the saints. This you see, and nothing more, except a poorly clad girl, kneeling, despairing and terrified, between the mysteries of good and evil, of God and the Devil. It is Gretchen. The spirit of evil is behind that pier, thundering fearful scoffings against the trembling sinner. It is the Cathedral scene from "Faust." What need here of aisles and church pews, candles and stained-glass windows? It is the sanctuary of God, and one great column will tell of His dignity and presence here better than many details that know not what they are about. "Remember," says Gordon Craig, "that on a sheet of paper which is but two inches square you can make a line which seems to tower miles in the air, and you can do the same on your stage, for it is all a matter of proportion."

This is the practical basis of it—suggestion rather than representation.

"Do not look first at Nature," Craig continues; "look in the play of the poet."

And that is the inner inspiration of it all.

Just how a producer should set about designing

THE SILHOUETTE SCENE IN GERMANY
DESIGN BY DR. LERT

Goethe's "Iphigenia" at the Neues Theater in Leipzig.

Photograph by Eugene Hutchinson

THE SILHOUETTE SCENE IN AMERICA

"The Sermon on the Mount" at the Little Theatre, Chicago.

his setting is a theoretical problem much quarrelled about among the producers themselves. Some aim mainly at producing a beautiful picture—in the artist's sense of the word. The artist, for instance, sees on an old-fashioned stage a Macbeth's castle which, if it were copied on canvas, would outrage any artist of any school. It merely represents some corner of some imaginary castle, a corner chosen for no reason at all or merely for its dramatic fitness. By all the tests which the artist applies to a canvas—proportion, balance, rhythm and so on—this picture is meaningless. It lacks what every artist demands in his work, something known as style. The producer will select the essential thing is this castle—the stairway down which Lady Macbeth walks in her sleep. This he will place in a semicircular recess at the back, and it will form a beautiful curve from the top half way down. This stairway is the chief fact in the setting—dramatically and artistically. At each side is a black wall, in front of it is a bare stone floor.

Or perhaps the producer has been controlled chiefly by another sort of purpose. He has to design the Platform scene in "Hamlet." He shows us in the foreground the floor of solid stone; off to the left is an immense patch of sky, grey and impenetrable; at the right is a large square tower, black as darkest midnight. When the haunted figure of Hamlet appears outlined against the sky with the square tower beside him setting off the curves of his figure and cloak, we look at nothing but Hamlet. That is, the producer's whole aim was to centre our attention and interest upon the actor.

But besides mere beauty and mere dramatic emphasis the producer may have a third principle in designing his scene. Imagine a large, gloomy room, with

dark walls and heavy curtains—where a man seems lost in the stale deadness. The oppressiveness is sensed rather than seen. But the oppressiveness which we feel is not so much that of the room as that of the characters in it. Or suppose a dark gallery, with square altars at each side, and flames ascending from them. In it all we feel the heroine's dominant emotion—the very spirit of agonised supplication, the "motif" of the scene. That is, the setting was intended to shadow forth the subjective meaning of the action, to make sensible states of soul.

These three motives, beauty, dramatic emphasis and subjective truth, are of course not mutually exclusive. They can (and probably should) all be present in a good stage-setting. But they represent three of the principal tendencies of modern inscenierung, and also, to some extent, three types of modern regisseurs.

As a conscious tendency the movement toward artistic stage-settings goes no farther back than the beginning of the twentieth century. But for many years preceding there had been experiments of one sort or another, and expressed theories that seem to look forward to modern times. The German architect Schinkel, designer of the Royal Schauspielhaus in Berlin, took a critical attitude toward stage-settings, demanding that they should support the drama without imposing their idiosyncracies upon it. For instance, he hated the construction of scenes by means of canvas wings (the only method then in existence) and proposed to mask the sides by means of hanging curtains which should remain throughout the play. Immermann, as artistic director of the Dusseldorf Theater, attempted to put Schinkel's ideas into practice. But the German stage of the time (like the

English) was wholly dominated by the actor's art, and he met with no encouragement. The chief impulse toward stage-reform, before the middle of the century, was a scholarly one. In 1843 Tieck produced "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in "the Shakespearian manner" at the Royal Palace in Potsdam, and Immermann before him had made the experiment.

But a new and partly artistic impulse came to Germany from England. Charles Kean, son of the great actor, instituted in 1852 his "Shakespeare revivals" which attempted to be "a true and complete image of the history and customs of a people." This was the beginning of the realistic and archæological Shakespeare scenery which is cultivated to-day by Beerbohm Tree. Through Dingelstedt, director at Munich and Weimar, the idea reached the Meininger brothers at their little private theatre, and was fostered by them with almost religious fervour. The famous journeys of their troupe, which continued from 1874 until the nineties, opened the eyes of German audiences to the possibilities of stage-setting. Their realistic tendency, somewhat simplified, was continued at the Deutches Theater in Berlin, under L'Arronge, from 1883 to 1894, and under Otto Brahm, from 1894 until 1904. The reaction to the influence of the Meiningers showed itself in the famous "Shakespeare stage," at Munich, arranged by Intendant von Perfall and Oberregisseur Savits. This fulfilled Schinkel's old demand for side-curtains, and made use of the conventional fore-stage, which is now a common thing in German stage-settings. The Munich Shakespeare stage marked a desire for simplicity, but it was once more an English influence, that of Gordon Craig, which gave the great stimulus toward beauty which marked the first decade of the new century.

Before his influence was felt, however, Adolph Appia, probably the most powerful theorist of the new movement, had written his remarkable book, "Die Musik und die Inscenierung." In this, as an artist, he attempted to deduce from the content of the Wagner music-dramas the proper stage-settings for them. His conclusions anticipated much of the best work of recent years and his theories have been put in practice in more or less modified form on a great many stages—not so much (if at all) for the Wagner dramas themselves, which are living under a rigid tradition (the "what the Master wished" myth) but for operas and the more lyrical plays where the producer has artistic ability and a free hand in applying it.

Appia started with the principle that the setting should make the actor the all-important fact on the stage. He saw the realistic impossibility of the realistic setting, and destructively analysed the current modes of lighting and perspective effects. But unlike the members of the more conventional modern school, he insisted that the stage is a three-dimension space and must be so handled as to make its depth living. He felt a contradiction between the living actor and the dead setting. He wished to bind them into one whole —the drama. How was this to be done?

Appia's answer to this question is his chief claim to greatness—genius almost. His answer was—"By means of the lighting." He saw the deadliness of the contemporary methods of lighting, and previsaged with a sort of inspiration the possibilities of new methods which have since become common. This was at a time when he had at his disposal none of the modern lighting systems. His foreseeing of modern practice by means of rigid Teutonic logic in the service the artist's intui-

tion makes him one of the two or three foremost theorists of the modern movement.

The lighting, for Appia, is the spiritual core, the soul, of the drama. The whole action should be contained in it, somewhat as we feel the physical body of a friend to be contained in his personality. Appia's second great principle is closely connected with this. While the setting is obviously inanimate, the actor must be in every way emphasised and made living. And this can be accomplished, he says, only by a wise use of lighting, since it is the lights and shadows on a human body which reveal to our eyes the fact that the body is "plastic"—that is, a flexible body of three dimensions. Appia would make the setting suggest only the atmosphere, not the reality, of the thing it stands for, and would soften and beautify it with the lights. The actor he would throw constantly into prominence while keeping him always a part of the scene. All the elements and all the action of the drama he would bind together by the lights and shadows.

With the most minute care each detail of lighting, each position of each character, in Appia's "productions," is studied out so that the dramatic meaning shall always be evident. Hence, any setting of his contains vastly more thought than is visible at a glance. It is designed to serve for every exigency of the scene—so that a character here shall be in full light at a certain point, while talking directly to a character who must be quite in the dark, or so that the light shall just touch the fringe of one character's robe as she dies, or so that the action shall all take place unimpeded, and so on. At the same time, needless to say, Appia's stage pictures are of the highest artistic beauty.

An extension of the Appia practice has given some

producers the idea of using the stage partially or entirely without any "solid" effect. We might call this sort of setting "pure atmosphere."

Chief among the producers of "pure atmosphere" is Ottomar Starke, a remarkably talented young regisseur who has worked mainly in Mannheim and Frankfurt-am-Main. His "atmosphere" is produced by the use of net curtains of comparatively delicate texture used in connection with lights and special devices, many of which are his own inventions. The effect depends upon a partially darkened stage. On the net-curtains, from above and behind, are thrown lights of various subdued hues. The nets absorb and diffuse the light, mingling with each other into an atmospheric whole. Under this practice they lose the definiteness which has always spoiled their effect with the footlight system. Sometimes the whole light of the scene is thrown from behind the back drop, which is semi-transparent. By skilful gradation and colouring of this back curtain fine effects of luminosity can be obtained. Clouds, or even flying beasts and humans, can be figured upon the back drop by means of a sort of moving picture machine. The secret of the use of net-curtains (beyond the general secret of knowledge and skill) lies in the use of the back light, which illuminates them (as contrasted with the front lighting, which simply reveals them).

But it is the theory of this method which is most interesting. "Lighting," says Mr. Starke, " is my music." Let the stage, by means of its lights, be as alive as the drama itself. Let the mood of the lights vary with the mood of the music or of the action. The internal unity which Appia foresaw is thus strikingly realised in Starke's procedure. Under this the lighting is usually quite arbitrary, making no pretense at natural justifi-

cation, partly because it throws the whole emphasis on the subjective values of the setting and partly because, in the regisseur's opinion, stage-setting should be "not nature, but style." Even where definite "plastic" or solid settings are required he usually surrounds them, as it were, with atmosphere, and lays chief stress on the effects of lighting.

Quite in opposition to Appia, who wishes to banish the painter and his principles altogether from the theatre, is George Fuchs, of Munich, who aims at a form of stage-setting that will permit the artist full play. This form is the "relief" or two-dimension stage, as in use at the Künstlertheater in Munich. Curiously enough, Fuchs starts from precisely the same premise as Appia—that the business of the setting is to emphasise the actor. But he argues thus: Since the actor must be emphasised, arrange such a stage as will permit him to be always in the foreground, where his voice and gesture will have full value. True perspective is impossible; therefore give up the third dimension altogether. In compensation you can have all the genius of the painter at your disposal, working untrammelled on a flat surface.

This type we might call the "pure picture" stage, since its obvious effort is toward pictorial beauty of effect. The stage (as at the Künstler) is very shallow, and is provided on the sides with a permanent frame in the shape of plain towers (with doors for entrances and exits) which can be moved toward or away from each other in order to contract or enlarge the frame. The background is usually a simple back drop or a single set piece of scenery placed either before a neutral curtain or before the cyclorama. The characters are seen outlined against this background like silhouettes (hence

the name "relief stage"). As often as possible they are seen in actual profile. In effect the whole is seen as though painted on a canvas. There is no attempt to make the characters seem plastic, rather the contrary.

This machinery demands a special treatment. The designs will tend toward the conventional, and proportion—"pure proportion"—will have high value. Pictorial beauty must be sought at every stage of the drama. Action and gesture must be somewhat conventionalised and studied, and quite removed from the actuality of life. The setting must choose only one or two significant details of the supposed scene (or even omit details altogether) and use them for the highest decorative effect. In short, the whole must aim at *style*, in the æsthetic and narrower sense of the word.

It is evident that such a method is somewhat limited in its application, that it will vary in its success according to the type of play presented, and that it cannot claim to represent anything like the whole art of stage production. Still the range of plays which can be satisfactorily presented on the relief stage is larger than one might suppose. Shakespeare, the problem play and comic opera, are all capable of conventional production, if the true motive of the conventionalisation, suggested by the play itself, be made the basis of it. The Cathedral scene in "Faust" will show only one solid pier against a black curtain. The garden scene will have a somewhat stiffly painted "back drop" with a railing and a bush or two in front. A modern interior will have merely a single "back set" showing a door and a window in a bare wall, and a few necessary "properties." "Orpheus in the Underworld" is played almost without scenery, the "picture" arising from the costumes and groupings.

The whole idea may strike one as stiff and grotesque, and certainly it sounds so in description. But it should be regarded as an experiment in conventionalisation and should be seen to be judged. Its stimulus to the theory of stage-setting has been very great.

Another pioneer, the father of them all, is Edward Gordon Craig of England. His work is in many respects the most radical and daring of all, and his influence is at present greater than any other one man's. But unlike the Germans he is not a theorist in the logical sense, and his "principles" can hardly be put into words. His practice will be described at greater length in the chapter on "Stylisation," a theory or way of looking at the subject of stage-setting which owes its vitality in great measure to him.

These three men, Appia, Fuchs, and Craig, are the chief original influences in modern inscenierung (outside of Russia). They are of the sort who are "hard to get hold of," and their practice is often better than their precept, but in the future history of the modern stage movement they will bulk very large indeed.

We have said that the impulse toward artistic scene-setting came from England. It "came" in rather too literal a sense. For English theatres, on the whole, were strangely slow to understand and adopt the new ideas, which English audiences insisted on regarding as "foreign." The dignified and stately Shakespearian tradition of Beerbohm Tree continued to dominate both acting and scenery. Some of the most intelligent of the English theatrical people are bitterly opposed to the innovations. Miss Lena Ashwell combats the principle of the regisseur, saying that under it the actress is not allowed to act her part, but must act the director's idea of the part. Miss Horniman, who is

radical from head to toe, says that Craig's settings seem to her "pure nonsense."

It is Granville Barker who chiefly represents the new ideas in England. His remarkable seasons at the Court, Kingsway and Savoy theatres have given him an influence which he has used to vitalise English and stage methods. His Shakespearian performances, played at extremely rapid pace, have set a new tradition for Shakespearian acting. The settings, too, for these productions, have been unusual. They have returned in large measure to Shakespearian simplicity of stage, and have borrowed generously from Germany for detail. And the London public has liked it all immensely. Or at least it has been very curious. Perhaps Mr. Walkley's opinion of Barker's "The Winter's Tale," published in *The London Times*, best illustrates the prevalent attitude: "It was bound to come. Here, like it or lump it, is Post-Impressionist Shakespeare. The costumes are after Beardsley and still more after Bakst; the busbies and caftans and deep-skirted tunics of the courtiers come from the Russian Ballet, and the bizarre smocks and fal-lals of the merry-makers at the sheep-shearing come from the Chelsea Arts Club Ball. The Old Shepherd inhabits a model bungalow from the Ideal Home Exhibition with Voysey windows. Leontes reclines upon a seat which is frankly Art Nouveau. The Bohemian peasants are genuine Thomas Hardy. Squads of supers have symmetrical, automaton-like movements which show the influence of 'Sumurun.' . . . It is very startling and provocative and audacious, and on the whole we like it."

In Paris, Jacques Rouché, a rich dilettante, leased a run-down theatre on one of the outer boulevards, and managed it for several years as the Théâtre des Arts.

He was frankly addicted to German scenery, and was freely hated, when he was not sneered at, on that account. And now, by an extraordinary stroke of radical judgment on the part of the French Ministry, he has been made director of the Paris Opéra, and there he is doubtless planning, while professing to the newspapers the obligatory pre-occupation with "l'art français," to exemplify modern ideas in a way that will make history at the capital.

In nearly all modern inscenierung, whatever the "motif," there is some amount of conventionalisation. This calls into use a number of technical methods almost unknown to the American stage. They are necessarily somewhat artificial, and do not attempt to conceal their artificiality. Indeed their artificiality is often a part of their artistic purpose. Mr. Starke's remarkable settings for "Julius Cæsar," already mentioned, illustrate what is meant. For these designs are a study not only in decorative beauty, but also in practical economy. The six scenes were built on three wagons which were supplemented by simple additions here and there. A wagon, after being used for one scene, was simply reversed for another, its rear part being designed for the purpose. Far from producing a disagreeable effect this procedure actually helped to bind the play together by revealing, so to speak, its mechanical unity.

Another device is that of conventionalising the front part of the stage only. Some sort of setting, presumably suggesting the spirit of the play, will be arranged for the front part of the stage, allowing a curtained opening in the middle. Behind the curtains the setting will be changed for the various acts, and will be carried out with partial or complete realism. The

front setting may remain constant through the play or may be varied, with different curtains or decorations. Mr. Urban's setting for the third act of "Tales of Hoffmann" will illustrate a modification of the idea. The sides of the conventional front may remain curtained during a part of the play, to be uncovered for some scene in which the whole of the set will not be out of place.

Still another practice is to keep the conventional front constant and in full view of the audience throughout the play, making all the scene changes behind the inner curtain. The conventional front acts as a sort of frame for the stage pictures; it can be very potent, if wisely chosen, in binding all together into the dominant mood. It goes without saying that the action need not be kept behind this front setting, but can come forward whenever special emphasis, or the press of circumstances, demands. Indeed, it is hardly wise to keep the action too far back, since the acoustical results may be disastrous. And there is no reason why the action should not press forward, since the front setting is an artistic frame merely, and not a mechanical one.

A certain sort of conventional forestage has been used very extensively for some years past in producing Shakespeare and other classics, and has proved invaluable wherever it has been wisely used. The forestage can be conveniently built out over the usual orchestra pit in the ordinary theatre. Much of the action will take place here, especially that of an intimate sort, as, for instance, the comic relief scenes in Shakespeare, playing in front of the regular curtain, somewhat as vaudeville comedians come out to entertain the audience during changes of scene. It is quite possible, also, to provide a special curtain and simple properties which

can be used on the forestage for scenes of secondary importance, at the convenience of the producer. Some European stages, as, for instance, that at Weimar, are provided with easily convertible forestages, formed by raising the floor of the orchestra pit to the level of the stage and connecting the forestage and the auditorium by means of steps.

One very useful artistic device which has been strangely absent in the old stages is the contracted proscenium frame. There is no good reason why every stage picture should be as wide as the full proscenium opening. Certain scenes, as, for instance, a prison or a small interior, are thus made ludicrously large, and the actor is often drowned in a sea of space. Further, the larger scenes are more effective when alternating with small ones. Modern practice in Europe contracts the stage frame at pleasure, either by means of sliding sides as at the Künstlertheater, or by side and top curtains of neutral shade, or by a special frame designed for each scene and let down from above. Many scenes on the German stage are played with a stage width of no more than twelve or fifteen feet. The resulting intimacy and variety (not to mention economy) make the device too valuable to dispense with.

The use of the cyclorama, in whatever form, has caused certain changes in the general method of scene setting. The old practice demanded that the "wings" be always "masked"—that some sort of scenery be placed at the sides of the stage to hide from view the bowels of the stage farther in. Thus we had frequently the anomalies of trees flourishing on the top of a mountain or on a desert prairie. Simplicity in an out-of-door scene was thus impossible. The necessary "masking" is now done by the cyclorama. It is no longer needful

28594

to put into the scene anything that is not required by the drama. With proper lighting we can get something like an effect of infinite space in all directions.

The triumphant shoutings of some of the newer producers should not hide from us the fact that they are all sorely puzzled over certain problems. They say, confidently enough, that the setting should express the action and harmonise with its spirit. But they are under the disadvantage that very few of the plays they produce were written for this style of production.

The chief difficulty they meet with lies in the inevitable contradiction between the parts and the whole. Each setting of each scene, they maintain, should harmonise with its action; but also, all the scenes should harmonise with each other, else what becomes of unity? Most dramatists, Shakespeare for instance, wrote with the effect of the individual scenes in mind. The "unity of the whole" was the merest by-product, to be discovered, if at all, after considerable mystic delving. Thus any unity which a regisseur may give to his production must usually be got at some sacrifice; many of the individual scenes must be falsified, or at least robbed of their full potential effect, that they may be made to harmonise with the particular "unity" which the regisseur has arbitrarily selected for the play.

Take the same problem in its more detailed phase. The torch which Lady Macbeth holds as she descends the circular stairway, casts before her a lengthened shadow which precedes her on her deathly march. This shadow is a good mass, considered merely as pure design. It is also fitting from the dramatic standpoint. It is an ideal little touch, the shadow being at once good drama and good pictorial art and got without straining. Now imagine how complicated the problem becomes if one

seeks to get something of the same double fitness in every moment of a long scene, when characters are coming and going, when the action demands many movings and shiftings. Must we give up this double fitness, or strain the action of the play in order to achieve it? Or perhaps, must we write new plays with this nice fitness continually in mind?

Of course no answer can be given. Each problem is unique, each producer must throw his personality into its solution. Sacrifices and compromises are demanded continually, and not more than half a dozen producers in the world at present are ready to take a thorough course and achieve their artistic unity at all costs.

These problems more properly belong in the chapter on "Stylisation," where they will be discussed and illustrated more completely. But they will enter into a producer's troubles the moment he envisages inscenierung as something having its own artistic values.

It can be readily inferred from what has been said how such revolutions in the background of the drama must affect what we regard as its more intimate parts —action, gesture, voice, and so forth. As a matter of fact the success of such a producer as Max Reinhardt is due at least half to the modulating of his acting to his artistic ensemble. Many German theatres which have as good or better stage setting at times, fail to achieve his effects because they are working with actors who have carried down from a former generation their traditions of acting based on "points" or "effects." If we are changing our conception of the acted drama as a whole it is evident that not alone the stage-setting, but also all the actor's work, must be modified to the new ideal. It is not merely the harmonisation of individuals to the acting ensemble, a thing which was well enough known

and practised in the nineties, but the harmonisation of these individuals and of the ensemble itself to what the "stylists" would call the "mood," that inner value from which the whole drama is conceived as taking its rise. Gesture is coming to be regarded as revealing not the sentiments expressed, but the sentiments felt. The "tempo," which formerly was aimed merely to set the effect of the individual scenes, is now thought of as a whole, even with something of a decorative value, like the allegro, andante, scherzo, and presto of a symphony. To many producers "points" have value not in themselves or even in their revelation of character, but only in their revelation of the "mood" of the play. The art of make-up, be it also noted, suffers certain happy changes under the newer system of lighting: for under the glare of the footlights an actor had to overcome, by violent pencillings and colourings, the deadly effect of the light which tended to make all things as one; under a natural lighting the actor's face and expression retain something like their natural values. Costumes, it need not be said, must be chosen with regard to the colour of the other costumes and to the colour scheme of the whole scene.

How completely the new conceptions of stage-setting have changed the practice of production has only been suggested in the present chapter. The revolution has opened the theatre doors to many specialists and workmen formerly foreign to it, and they are bringing their best fruits to its service. When we have seen who these men are and how ancient and noble is the tradition they bear, we shall realise better the import and the complexity of modern inscenierung.

"Helène de Sparte." Design by Bakst

An example of the fantastic scene executed almost entirely on the back drop. The color is brilliant and crude.

CHAPTER IV

THE ARTISTIC FORCES: PURE DESIGN

PURE design in works of representative art (such as pictures), is an artificial abstraction from practical artistic problems. It performs for us the service which abstraction and generalisation perform for us in any case—helps us to find our way about in a maze of apparently unrelated facts. The "rules" of political economy or ethics are only abstractions which enable us to order our minds in facing the facts of wealth-production or human conduct. But they must be regarded as reflecting facts, not as governing them; they must be held constantly subject to revision. If we stop with our abstract deductions we are often false to the facts. On the other hand, we cannot envisage the facts except through the help of abstract deductions. Abstraction helps us to think; it must not tyrannise over our thinking.

This is the value of "pure design." It helps the artist to grasp many facts about the pictures he has studied and to order his mind while he makes new ones. An artist, for instance, looks at a picture, say an interior with a seated figure. In the first instance the picture is a representation of a natural scene. But after looking at it for a time, he ceases to see the window, the table, the seated figure (perhaps he gets bored with these facts) and sees only the outlines. He sees vertical lines and horizontal lines, a curve here gently

contrasting with a solid mass there. These please him and he wonders how to produce a similar pleasing effect in his picture. Now to go through a process of experimentation, painting many doors, tables, and seated women until he finds a beautiful combination of lines, would be an unwise waste of energy. So he abstracts from the actual facts, regards the lines as values in themselves, and experiments with these values, exactly as a mathematician abstracts from the numbers in a group of arithmetical problems and uses letters to represent the similar terms in each problem. And just as the mathematician reaches thereby a result which can easily be applied to all his problems, so the artist, experimenting with abstract (or "pure") design, reaches a set of conclusions, which he will call laws or principles, which he can apply to all his pictures.

But the working artist may not stop here. He may become fascinated with his abstract problem and consider it the whole problem. He may say, as Whistler did, that the thing represented is of no value (can be seen, in fact, every day in the real world); what is of value is the relations of the abstract qualities. He will see all his pictures merely as problems in pure design, pure colour, and so on. This is what Whistler meant when he said that a portrait should be just as beautiful upside down as right side up. And the layman can get a glimpse of his feeling by studying a good picture —say Whistler's portrait of Sarasate; here the delicately poised violin bow, contrasting with the vertical line of the picture, the gentle but organic outline of the figure, all can be felt as things of beauty in themselves.

The workers in all the arts must make use of these abstractions to avoid frittering away their time. But the layman while benefiting from their results need

not accept the abstract "laws" any more than he would accept those of the theoretical ethicist or economist. In the modern theatre the artists' influence has been so strong that we begin to feel pure design as a value in itself. But we ought to regard it only as a means of envisaging and ordering the practical facts.

"Design" is a technical word precious to the working artist, because it represents things which to him are precious. But we can give it a true every-day meaning. "Design" in art is simply what it is in life—concrete *purpose*. Once the artist has abstracted from the door, table, and seated figure, he finds he must *do* something with the lines which remain. What he will do (always, remember, in terms of the lines themselves, since he has abstracted from everything else), what his *purpose* is with these lines—to create a certain centre of interest, with rhythm and balance, or what not—this is his design.

It is evident that the older stage settings totally lacked any design in this sense. The only function which was given them was a representative one. And perhaps the stage designers would never have thought of giving purpose to their lines except for the growing simplicity of stage settings demanded by the taste of the time. Once we have reduced the "Faust" Prison-scene to a wall, a door, a gate, and the open sky, we find ourselves limited to a few lines and surfaces. No producer with an artistic sense can resist using these lines with some *purpose*. This pressure of simplicity we may take to be the origin of pure design in modern stage-settings.

The elements, we have said, are lines and masses —nothing more. Lines and masses can come to have a very great meaning—not meaning in the layman's

sense, as the "meaning" of a sentence, but meaning in terms of pure design. What wonders can be done with a few lines, or with a few masses of black or of colour, or with one or two details—important ones! Stand before some Gothic cathedral — close to it. Look against its wall and upward, and let those lines engrave themselves upon your eyeballs—lines one after another pressing tirelessly up into space. Forget that life is made of facts, forget that there is a cheap café just behind you. Let the world blot itself out and let only those lines remain. You seem to ascend with them—whither? That you cannot tell; upward! that is the whole of it. The noises of the city are a blur; your thoughts become misty. Only those lines remain, striving upward. And they will remain and strive, most likely, after half a dozen governments, liberal, revolutionary, and reactionary, have frittered themselves away.

Something like this is the effect of line—pure line, in the theatre. The house is dark; only through a mystic frame, "a sheet of paper but two inches square," throbbing in a subdued light, are seen lines which seem "to tower miles in the air." This is the sort of stuff to make infinity visible.

But this is not all. Behind the aspiring lines of the cathedral, airy and thread-like in themselves, was a solid mass of masonry, hauled from a distance and built up with we know not how much weary labour of men. What firmly supports lines and gives them their meaning, is mass. Imagine yourself rested, passive, looking into this wonderful theatre frame, seeing besides a few mighty lines, two or three great masses, one narrow and rising out of sight on one side, and another shorter, more compact and limited, to balance with the

From "The Art of the Theatre." William Heinemann, London

"HAMLET." DESIGN BY GORDON CRAIG

other—masses solid, impenetrable, and eternal. There is something in these primitive natural forces which speaks to us as ideas cannot. They are of the very stuff of earth and of nature out of which all ideas and refinements grow. In their simplicity they feed our senses, as a great idea feeds the mind.

These abstract elements have to the artist a meaning, not as we say that a Gothic cathedral expresses a "sense of aspiration," or a Greek temple a "sense of completeness," but a definite sensuous reaction for each element, like the various chords in music. These elements are more or less definite units of value, which can be contrasted and compared with other units, producing new combinations, new complex values, and new sensuous experiences. Thus the artist can build up a whole language out of his lines and surfaces, as rich, as varied, as flexible, as our language of words and syntax.

In the strict sense, pure design can exist only by and for itself, else it is not "pure." In this sense, only decorations composed of lines and surfaces, representing nothing, can be called pure design. Pure decoration is abstract, though perhaps only in a philosophical sense an "abstraction." In the present chapter, however, we are considering only the pure-design *element* in stage pictures, which are all to some extent representative. This has become a conscious element, and is easily to be felt by a sensitive observer. Therefore we are justified in speaking of it as pure design, though it is only a subsidiary factor in a representative picture.

Pure design is "intensive" in spirit in that you get an additional value from it not by adding a new detail but by looking a second time at the old. The subtle interplay of relations that can be obtained from the balance and rhythm of a few selected straight lines,

curves, and masses, is enormous. But that is the artist's affair.

On the stage a pure design usually has some representative function. Or rather the design is the abstract vision of the representative stage picture; it can only theoretically be separated from the thing represented. And this picture finds its representative function enhanced and not diminished when the feeling for pure design is introduced into it. For the spirit of pure design, which always desires order and rejects any additional detail that might destroy balance and orderliness, lends to the carefully selected lines and masses a greater importance and emphasis, enabling the designer to point the poetic effect or to centre the interest upon some spot in the scene with much more accuracy and delicacy than would be possible if the picture were cluttered with unpurposed details.

Suppose the stage to consist merely of low steps, with gigantic curtains rolling in from either side, and in many folds (each forming a high vertical line), retreating toward the open sky just visible between the cleft which the converging curtains leave. This is a rough description of Gordon Craig's design for Act I, scene iv, of the famous "Hamlet" which was produced at the Art Theatre in Moscow. Here we have essentially a pure design in vertical lines—nothing more. With an irregular persistence these lines carry upward into space. The only horizontal lines are those of the steps, which contrast with and accentuate the vertical lines. This is all simple enough, but it is on record that the preparation for the production occupied full two years' time, not a little of which was devoted to arranging the exact folds of the curtains.

Or imagine a small dark room. In it are only

two light spots—one the window in the upper left hand corner of the picture, the other the face of an old man, toward the lower right hand corner. This is Martersteig's design for the thirteenth scene of the second part of "Faust" produced at Cologne in 1907. The large, square, dead light spot contrasts with the small tortured face. The living intensity of the small spot balances with the blankness of the large one This latter is off in one corner of the picture, the former (the centre of interest, of course) is well toward the centre. This is essentially a pure design in mass. A single straight candlestick on the table contrasts with Faust's bent figure, and this adds a touch of pure design in line.

Or imagine a stage with two square pillars at each side and a row of steps between. An ill-defined mass, perhaps a coffin, rests in the middle on the platform, and on each side stands a tall torch shooting three thin flames upward into space. On the top step a woman sits, weeping. Here is a very simple arrangement of vertical and horizontal lines, against a supporting mass—the great mass of darkness at the back. But the vertical lines dominate—witness the living flames of the torch. This is G. Wunderwald's design for the "Cathedral scene" in Hebbel's "Die Niebelungen."

To the artist such scenes are first of all arrangements in lines and masses. But their chief value on the modern stage lies in their ability to carry poetical suggestion. Here is a set of simple cathedral piers, grouped in a semicircle as a sort of apse. The piers join high above the stage into noble Gothic arches. That is all. It is Linnebach's setting for the German version of "Everyman," at the Royal Theatre in Dresden. Here we have the ecclesiastical tone of the drama

shadowed forth in its simplest form, with its most direct symbols. A Gothic pier and arch—what suggests the church's spiritual motherhood more powerfully than this?

Or here is a huge doorway, two and a half times as high as it is wide, set in a bare stone wall and approached by steps. It is Gordon Craig's design for Sophocles' "Elektra." What can more immediately suggest the classic severity of the play, with its mystery of immense things beyond, than this stark doorway?

Or here is the exterior of a prison tower, apparently set on a parapet, out in the open sky. The lines somehow converge to carry the interest toward those barred gates from which a woman will presently step forth. It is the last scene of the first part of "Faust,"—Martersteig again, in the famous Cologne production.

The apse and the door "represent" nothing; the prison represents a prison. But all three take the essential features of the scene, combine them so that the lines and masses shall have beauty and meaning, and order them so that the scenes shall with simple materials have the maximum of poetic suggestiveness. And all three make use of what the artists have provided for our use through their device of the abstraction of pure design.

But nearly all stage pictures, which we have been analysing according to the view of the designer, are fundamentally poetic and dramatic. The Hamlet scene, by its designer's own confession, is meant to suggest "a lonely soul in a dark place." The scene from the second part of "Faust" is meant to make us feel the apartness of Faust from "all things transitory," which are perhaps just suggested by the window, behind which, though dimly, the world still lives. The Hebbel scene

may suggest the oppressive blackness of the woman's soul. In short, pure design on the stage, though it has a value of its own, should not be regarded as a language of beauty unapplied to the values of life.

Many artists want to consider pure design, or design and colour, as the whole of a picture. Don't suppose that the stage is free from this tendency. A sincere artist will be astonishingly selfish in the things that concern his art. If we put one of the abstract artists in charge of our theatre we may expect to see the drama distorted into violent shapes, or even robbed of all its proper meaning, for the sake of making the stage designs "pure." Many excellent producers are doing this now. There will probably always be this danger that pure design will try to monopolise the stage picture. It is for the audience everywhere to like what it likes, to listen open-mindedly to what a sincere artist has to say, but then to accept its own judgment instead of that of any specialist.

But though pure design can become a most tyrannical master we must not forget its constant service to art. Every picture will contain the elements of pure design, whether or no. We want these elements to be beautiful. And while no stage picture, perhaps, should be "just as good up side down," each should be artistically satisfying to one who feels the values of pure design.

CHAPTER V

THE ARTISTIC FORCES: COLOUR

IN this chapter, as in the last, we are dealing with a "pure" subject—abstracted from the various influences with which it must commonly work in practice. It is the more necessary to treat it in this way because colour has only recently come into the theatre as an independent art with laws of its own. It is at present only in process of application.

Ten years ago the problem of colour was exactly like the problem of stage design—merely a representative one. Use such colours as will represent the colours of the thing represented—that was the end of it. But just as modern stage art is demanding that the design of a stage picture be satisfactory in itself, so also is it demanding that the colours used be satisfactory as colours. A room was coloured like a room—that was all. But suppose we look at this room until all is obliterated except the colours of it; is this part of the picture beautiful or not? Modern stage art demands that it be beautiful. If beautiful colouring interferes with the dramatic fitness of the setting, then—no, do not make the setting dramatically unfitting, that is not necessary; find another setting which will combine dramatic fitness with satisfactory colouring. This is always possible, except in the rare case where the play calls for ugly colouring, when many producers would

say the play should not be produced at all. On the whole it has been abundantly proved that colour as an art can enter with full dignity into the service of the theatre.

In looking at the work of the great stage colourists the layman can deduce a few general principles concerning colour manipulation in the theatre. Such deductions at least sharpen the observation.

Colours, on stage as on easel, do not remain quite themselves when used in combination with other colours. Some "kill" each other; some emphasise each other. Those which most emphasise each other are the pairs known as complements, which, when mixed, make white (or, with pigments, grey). Red and bluish-green, for instance, are complements: Violet and pure yellow, blue and orange, and so on. White light is a mixture in certain proportions of all the spectral colours. White light can also be produced by mixing any pair of complements—yellow and violet light, or red and bluish-green light. The common explanation (far from scientific) is that complements, when juxtaposed, emphasise each other because they are the only colours which do not contain some element of each other.

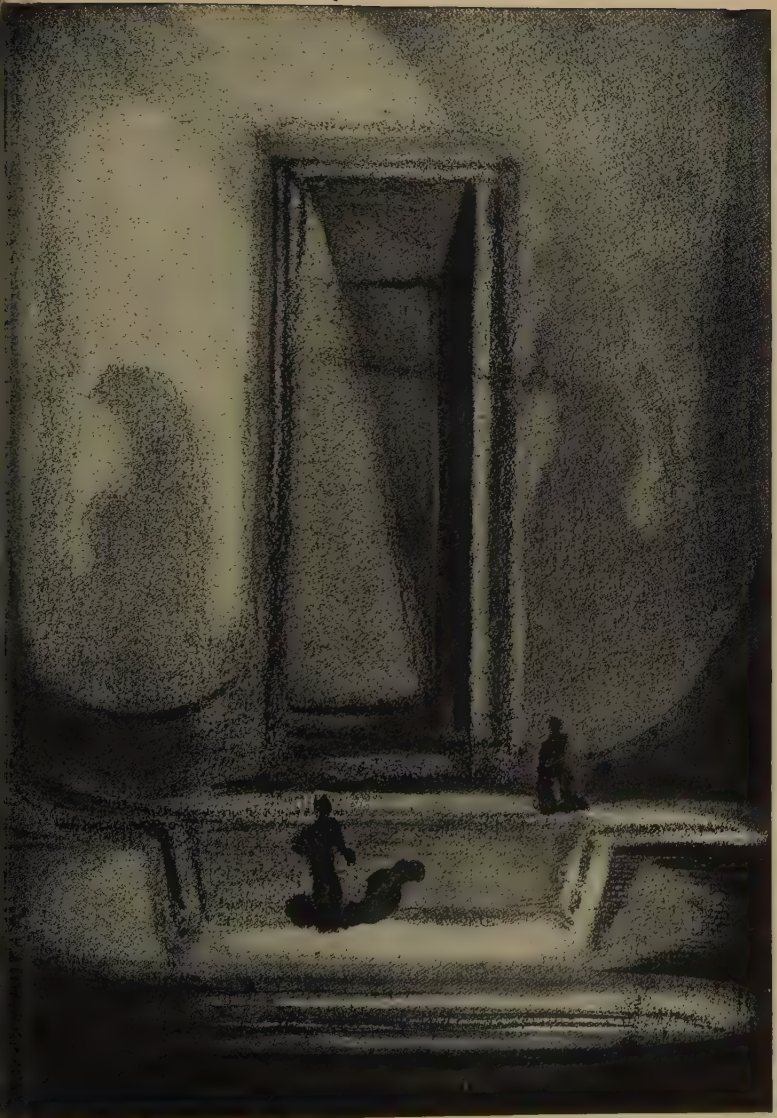
But there is another element in the effectiveness of a colour. The hues at the blue end of the spectrum are less violent than those at the red end. The latter have a longer wave length than the former (a ratio of something like seven to four) and, so to speak, hit harder. For this reason they are called "warm" colours and the others "cold." An artist, being sensitive to this distinction, always demands some sort of balance between the "warms" and the "colds." A spot of red seems to burn on a blue canvas, but it would be comparatively mild on one of green. The contrasting

of "warms" with "colds" is one of the chief sources of poetic effect in painting.

But these conditions are rarely met with in their crudity. For colours, in theoretic parlance, have two dimensions (some theorists say three). First they have colour itself, or, in technical language, hue. Second, they have luminosity, the amount of white mixed with them. There is a definite point of luminosity at which each colour gains its highest intensity—when it seems "reddest" or "yellowest." So the brilliance of our colouring in actual use will be due not only to the hues which are juxtaposed, but also to the intensity at which they are taken.

But it is still ordinarily too crude to use merely complementary, contrasting, and luminous colours in our pictures. We usually prefer to use one or more of our colours in several shades—red modulating into orange, blue modulating into green, and so on. We usually select certain easily distinguished hues as the basis of our work with colour—violet, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red, the so-called primary and secondary colours. Having chosen certain of these for our colour scheme we use them in various shades, or more accurately, various related hues, say of a reddish orange up to red. These various related hues, when used in proper combination, buttress the pure colour, red, which dominates the group. But if we now add hues from the other (the violet) side of the pure colour, we weaken this dominance of the red by bringing in an admixture of blue. The firm unity of the red group is lost.

These three principles indicate the means of getting the greatest bald effect out of selected colours or groups of colours. But when a designer comes to har-



From "The Art of the Theatre." William Heinemann, London

SOPHOCLES'S "ELECTRA." DESIGN BY GORDON CRAIG

monise or contrast selected colours he must consider further elements. A bald contrast of complementary colours, besides being too crude, is not contrast enough. Complementary colours are highly contrasted in hue; they can also be contrasted in shade. Ordinarily only one of them will be used at its greatest intensity, or near it. The other will be "toned down," in order to give prominence to the first. This brings some harmony out of the stark conflict.

A second element in contrast is that of mere amount of colour. A painter will never divide his canvas equally between two contrasting colours. But, having toned down one in order to set off the intensity of the other he will ordinarily introduce another element of contrast, or rather will regain the lost balance, by using a much greater quantity of the weaker than of the stronger. The less luminous colour, that is, will ordinarily be used as a background. The more luminous gains something like purpose when thus concentrated.

Besides the spectral hues of which we have been speaking there are certain colours, or rather ways of using colour, which are not subject to these laws—gold and silver, black, and (with certain reservations) white. These can ordinarily be used where desired, with any colour combination, and their use is rather a matter of decorative taste than of colour laws.

It must not be supposed that these few paragraphs explain how an artist works. An artist, and especially a painter, moves in mysterious ways. His trained taste, his quick imagination, will do any number of things which the laws would condemn; and, providing only that people find his work beautiful, the laws can be trusted later to readjust themselves to legalise his work. The working artist, in reality, makes his own laws. But

these principles, nevertheless, will be found to lie at the bottom of most artistic colour as used on the modern stage (though used very little, it must be confessed).

Generally speaking, we may say that colour (apart from its mere representative function) can be used on the stage in two ways—decoratively and symbolically. What we are calling the decorative use of colour is that which produces a pleasing colour design. Making one "abstraction," so as to see, in the scene before us, only colours and colour masses, we find a group of complementary colours, related hues, various tones, "warms" and "colds," and so forth. Are these pleasing? We should be able to come to our stage picture with the artist's eye, looking only for the pure colour design, and find it satisfactory. We may find a background of blues and greenish-blues, framed, more or less conventionally, with violet, and against these cold tones (probably used at a low intensity) characters costumed in brilliant yellows and oranges—the complements of the background. We may find a background of rich neutral orange and red with a spot of glittering cold blue toward the centre. Or we may see various related hues graduated up to a spot of brilliant pure colour which will form the pictorial centre of interest (where the important action will probably be played). Always, in a good stage picture, no matter how simple, there will be a balance and harmony of colour satisfactory to the artist's eye. A good producer, if he have an eye for colour, will be fecund in decorative colour effects here and there; one play, for instance, made a certain "picture" by grouping the characters (not stiffly or obviously) to form a pleasing curve in the background, the costumes being warmer in hue and more brilliant in intensity until the end of the line downstage—a

brilliant robe of orange-yellow. These effects, let it be repeated, should not be glaring, and should not be got by distorting the drama (they will naturally bulk larger in romantic and imaginative work); but of the various dramatically satisfactory ways of ordering a stage setting one will be most satisfactory in point of colour, and this should be sought for and chosen.

But decorative colour rarely exists as a thing in itself in a stage setting. Its more important office consists in symbolising the drama. Our decorative colour scheme will be not merely a beautiful thing but also a thing with a dramatic meaning. We have only to recall the terminology of colour to realise how rich colour is in poetic suggestiveness. One of the dances* which the Russian Imperial Ballet has been performing in all the European capitals, tells the story of a Caucasian queen who lured strangers into her palace and, having made them drunk with her orgies, put them to death. The erotic intensity of the whole scene was suggested in the fierce warmth of the oranges and reds of the setting and costumes, only slightly modified by the greens toward the centre. Only through the window was a very cold violet-blue. This offered not merely a contrast in feeling, setting off the warmth of the room, but a true complement of the principal colours, setting off the fierce yellow and orange of the costumes. At the end, after the orgy was over and the traveller had been put to death, the whole scene, even including the sky outside, was bathed in hot reds, suggesting the weariness and sweat following an intense period of passion.

A most remarkable example of the use of symbolic colour was given in the Paris production of d'Annun-

* Thamar.

zio's play, "La Pisanelle." Perhaps never before in the history of the modern stage have the principles of colour been carried so far. A somewhat detailed description of the colour schemes will suggest the use of colour in imaginative works.

The stage was divided laterally in half, the front section being decorated in black and gold (harmonising with all colours) and always in view of the audience, since the main curtain was behind it. This neutral section was conceived in the Byzantine spirit which dominated the whole and made an excellent frame for viewing all the acts. The drop curtain (a real curtain hanging loosely with real folds and not with painted ones) was of gold and black.

The prologue and the three acts were conceived each with a definite tone. And for each there was a special curtain revealed some two minutes before the commencement of the act by the raising of the drop curtain.

The drama played in Cyprus during the late crusades, when all the civilisations of Europe and Asia—Saracen, Byzantine, Italian, Norman, German, and Pagan Greek—were mingled pell mell. In the prologue we were shown what might be called an interior view of these civilisations. The colour scheme, as may be imagined, was far from simple. Yet all the chief hues were somehow set off with their complements, and the warmth of the picture centred downstage where most of the important action took place. The general colour scheme of the setting was deep purple and luminous green (complements enriched freely with designs of gold). Just what the scene represented was not clear, nor was it meant to be, but the effect was that of a richly decorated interior, dominated by a sort of primi-

SETTING FOR "EVERYMAN" AT DRESDEN OPERA HOUSE
DESIGN BY ADOLPH LINNEBACH
An example of the use of stylization to obtain "atmosphere"

tive ecclesiastical mood. A light blue thrown from the side completed the cold unity of the background. The costumes were of nearly all colours, but rich oranges and reds dominated, contrasting with the coldness behind. With a wealth of variety in the costumes it was easy for the producer to emphasise pictorially any important dramatic effect by grouping or "spotting" these costumes. At the close of the scene the chief dramatic conflict was between the prince and the queen, his mother. The queen, who had been pictorially inconspicuous, was clad in a brilliant yellow, and the prince, whose outer garment was of a somewhat neutral shade, confronted her, managing to display the inside of his garment—a most brilliant reddish violet. These two colours, the most brilliant and luminous of the whole act, were nearly enough complements to set off each other vividly; the attention was bound to be centred on these two confronted colours—where the dramatic interest also was centred. This was a perfect example of the use of symbolic colour for dramatic effect.

The motive of the first act was the diverse outer life of Cyprus. The scene was the quay. The back drop, rather crudely painted, showed the harbour, a confusion of heavy black lines, with a vessel at anchor in a slip. The whole curtain (quite at variance with nature) was suffused with a warm though low-toned red-orange, except for the small bit of water which was a vivid greenish-blue—the complement. The movement of the first part of the act was a riot of rich and contrasting colours. Various passionate suitors pleaded for the love of the slave girl. Then came the prince. He loved her chastely, as something holy. He was mantled in white and rode upon a white horse. At the

moment when she accepted him as a "bride in Christ,"—at the moment, that is, when her meaning in the drama changed—she was covered with the Prince's white robe and was carried off the stage on the white horse.

The second act was a convent garden. Its "motive" was peace and retirement. The curtain for the act was a restful pure blue, with a repeated design in white. The background, rather conventionally painted, was a neutral blue-green, with a touch of red-orange (a complement) in the centre. The nuns were in pure blue and white. La Pisanelle was clad in a greyish white. When the convent was violated by the entrance of the Prince of Antioch with his courtesans, brilliant, profane colour broke in upon the scene.

In the third act we are back in the pomp and cruelty of the court, in which La Pisanelle is to die through the intrigues of the queen. The curtain for the act was an intense green with a stiff gold design. The colour scheme of the whole was too complex to be explained in words. But one brilliant device must be mentioned. La Pisanelle is to be smothered under a mass of flowers. Now we have noticed repeatedly throughout the act a peculiar red in various shades, usually of a low tone and verging toward purple—in the costumes of the ladies in waiting, in the doorway, in the garden behind. As the denouement approaches, reds come upon the scene, each more intense and more purplish. Finally the slaves enter, and, with a mass of flowers of the most intense and hot red violet, smother the Pisan girl. This gradual crescendo of a dominant colour up to one almost too powerful to be endured was an effect which can never be forgotten.

We have been able only to suggest the richness of colour effect in this production. Naturally such bar-

baric brilliancy must be reserved for the plays which can stand it, and that may not happen often. But this production was of especial importance since it showed at its most intense the work of a man whose name will probably bulk large as a colourist in the history of the theatre—Leon Bakst, the designer of the scenes and costumes. Bakst is a Russian Jew who began life as a painter, probably with no thought of the stage. He studied in Paris until nearly thirty, absorbed much of the new French storm and stress, and returned to Russia. Here, after a few years, he became connected with the St. Petersburg Imperial Opera House as designer, and designed a great part of the wonderful stage pictures which have been carried through Europe by the Russian Imperial Ballet, as well as the scenes for several special productions, such as d'Annunzio's "La Pisanelle" and "Saint Sebastian."

His colouring forms the sharpest possible contrast to all that the Western world has known. German stage colour prides itself on being "discreet," on working harmonious effects with neutral tones and few of them. Not so Bakst, Benois, Golovine, Anisfeldt. Colours for Bakst are rarely too many or too brilliant. And, working in this way, he has been forced more obviously to use the fundamental colour laws which we have described. By plunging to the foundation of colour he has opened up the sources of the subject. His bold use of intense tones and his inexhaustible ability to manipulate colour effects in the service of the inner drama make him a man to whom all the world, sooner or later, will have to go to school.

Such results are perhaps far enough from what most painters would accept as beautiful. But we must remember that though colour on the modern stage has

been brought there by the professional painters, first of all, there are several conditions peculiar to the stage which have made stage colour an art by itself.

First, there is the mere technical condition of lighting. Colours on a canvas are produced by pigments. Colours on the stage are produced by pigments and lights. These two function and mix in totally different ways. The primary colours for pigments, according to recent experiments, are yellow, magenta, and cyan blue; for lights the primaries are green, red and violet. The two have distinct and peculiar qualities. The problem is complicated. Colours that are correct in the light of day, are altogether incorrect under the yellow light of the "white" foots. If, in place of "white" we presently introduce a green or an amber, the mixture resulting is so far from nature and from the intention of the designer that it bears no relation whatever to the result intended. An expert stage colourist regards this as one of the conditions of his work. Stage colour now has two factors—two dimensions, almost—pigment and light.

Marvellous things can be produced by these two factors. It would astonish the layman to learn that a colour painted on a stage canvas is quite black until called forth by a light of a similar colour. Nevertheless, if you throw a green light on a red surface, your result is—black. This is out of all consonance with the old easy-going "laws" of mixtures. The red, however, will not become visible (as red or any other hue) until a light is thrown on it which contains at least some element of red. Working on this principle, the Viennese regisseur, Joseph Urban, now at the Boston Opera House, has developed a complex system of colouring which, from analogy with the French impressionists,

he calls "pointillage." He spots or "points" his canvas with all the colours he intends to bring out on it in the course of the scene. At a distance the spaces between the points are not visible as such, so when he throws a red light on the scene, all the red spots jump out of the canvas and blend together to make a red surface. Similarly, if he now throws a green light, the red spots retire into darkness, and the green take possession of the whole surface. The result to the observer, is nothing short of magical. The process becomes complicated through the fact that one does not always throw a pure primary light on the scene; if the light is a mixture of green and red then both the green and the red spots become visible, according to the proportions of green and red in the light. If then white (a mixture of all three primaries) is thrown upon the surface, all colours painted thereon appear. This means usually either that white light must not be used or that the pigments must be used in such proportions that the desired color will appear under the white light. For instance, if the surface contains spots of all three primary colours, two portions of red, two portions of blue, and four portions of green, the two portions of red, blue and green will blend to make white, and the two remaining portions of green will stand out as green, only tinted with a strong white light. And if the white illumination be strong, even this will not be successful, since the strong white light will reveal the spotting. However, the skilful regisseur uses all these conditions to produce an endless palette of possible colours.

Another investigator, proceeding according to the same principles, has perfected the purely mechanical side of the process to an astonishing degree. This is Munroe R. Pevear, a young architect of Boston. He

has devoted his efforts to determining, to the highest possible degree of accuracy, the real primary colours in lights, and their action with all sorts of pigments, simple and mixture. With simple Tungsten bulbs of the primary colours he achieves a most astonishing variation of hues and tones and shades at will. He goes to no trouble to "point" his canvas; he mixes the colours he desires in the pigment surface. The whole principle is that of Mr. Urban, only more accurately carried out. There is no doubt a certain gain in naturalness in the avoidance of "pointillage." But the artist with the impressionist's instinct will not be any the more ready to dispense with spotting, since he claims it reproduces the effect of living light as a flat mixed pigment can never do.

This technical peculiarity in stage colouring gives a new artistic reason for such colouring as that of Bakst. For a colour once drawn out by a similarly coloured light, is more brilliant than under white. And this brilliancy, so much greater than is possible to the easel painter, must become one of the elements of the stage æsthetic of colour. Mr. Bakst and the other Russians have set out to use its possibilities to the full. Hence their barbarous contrasts, their use of fundamental tones, their dazzling mixtures of hues and tints.

And the special function of the theatre gives its colour a particular æsthetic. For the stage picture is always living, dramatic. Its peculiar beauty is one of movement, of participation; it is dynamic, whereas that of the easel picture is rather contemplative. Hence great vigour and brilliant contrasts are proper to it. What would be garish in the exhibition hall is inspiring on the stage.

And yet, perhaps even this is true for us only be-

cause we are infants in the art of the stage. The savage, having newly discovered colours, delights in fierce reds and violent yellows. And we, who have just discovered colour on the stage, with its peculiar living brilliance, may be in the savage stage. We may come to find a Bakst scene garish, and to demand refinement and subtlety. When we do it will be in the regular course of our artistic evolution and will not be a thing to reject, any more than we ought to reject barbarous colour if it pleases us now.

CHAPTER VI

THE ARTISTIC FORCES: LIGHTING

OF all the problems of the old stage-setting that of lighting was perhaps the simplest. Its chief principle was merely this: Let there be light. Its second principle was this: In case of emotion, let there be green light. One easily recalls the stage table which shone brighter on its under side than on top. On the old stage no one ever had a shadow. Or if there was a shadow, it was cast, life size, on the distant landscape.

In the real world light comes from somewhere. So the first principle of realistic lighting on the stage is that the light shall seem to come from somewhere—from the sun, in an out-of-door scene, from the lamp or chandelier in an interior, and so on. In either case people have shadows, and shadows which are cast away from the direction of the light.

The application of this first, simple principle of modern stage lighting—that light should come from one direction, gave people rational shadows. But this was not all. Producers immediately discovered that shadows may be beautiful masses in the design of the scene. From that moment stage lighting became a fine art. Just as Rembrandt gave his portraits a decorative unity by lighting from one direction, so the modern producer, by means of lighting, makes the parts of his stage blend into a complete picture.

Once the producers began to experiment with these effects they rediscovered another principle. This we can describe roughly as the hypnotic power of light. Put a man in a dark room and make him fix his gaze for a certain length of time on a bright spot and you centre his attention to a focal point, deadening the merely logical factors of his brain and sensitising him many times over to sensuous impressions—a state of partial hypnosis. Now these, within certain limits, are exactly the conditions of the theatre—a spectator in a dark room looking at a bright spot. And a state of partial hypnosis, at least to the extent of deadening the logical faculties and heightening the sensuous ones, is precisely that desirable for the complete reception of a work of art. Not, of course, that the logical faculties have no place in art, but that the work of art, appealing primarily through the channels of the senses, can be most vividly and justly received when the particular prejudices and mental processes of the receiver are in abeyance.

One more quite peculiar quality of light was early perceived by the theorist Appia. This we may call its dynamic quality. Light seems a quivering, living thing to us. No other sensuous excitement, save possibly music, can seize and absorb our attention so completely. So, with certain sorts of drama, the newer producers have discovered how to make the light seem to represent the soul of the action itself, carrying us with it in its ebb and flow and giving us the sense of living in its inner life.

Before we can begin any work in artistic lighting we must do some destroying. One element in the old lighting must go, and go completely. That element is the footlights as conventionally used. We can say this with

careless ease now that the Fortuny system has given us a better way. But even before this invention was made known the case against the footlights must have been obvious to any sensitive man of the theatre; that "the foots" continued as long as they did indicates the stagnation of the old theatre in all but purely literary art.

The footlights, with their corresponding border lights from above, give a flat illumination. They make figures visible, but not living; they destroy that most precious quality of the sculptor, relief. They were designed to give the greatest amount of illumination, nothing more. They are meant for the flat surface, not for solid figures. It is the shadows, the nooks and crannies of light and shade, that show a figure to be solid and plastic. Against the flat, unreal lighting of the old theatre the actors had to distort their faces with violent cosmetics. Stage properties and solid parts of the setting were made hard and lifeless by being equally illuminated in all parts. Further, the footlights give a crude, direct glare, whereas the light of nature is softened by being reflected with infinite complexity from innumerable objects and from innumerable directions. Still more serious, the footlights reveal instantly the artificiality of any other light used (as, for instance, the front or side "spot"), and cross and conflict with it in a most disagreeable way. Add to these considerations the facts that footlights come from the bottom, and, with the border lights, cast no shadows (except huge ones on the black curtain), and we have a combination of unrealities that seems almost to have been maliciously purposed.

What is there to put in place of the "footlights?" Most important of all there is the revolutionary Fortuny system, already mentioned, which in some modi-

fication or other has influenced the lighting of nearly every important stage in Germany. The pure Fortuny system was designed for use with a Kuppelhorizont, but only in a few instances is it used exactly as its inventor designed it. The essential part of the scheme is the principle of reflected light. Many theatres use this principle in some way without paying royalties to the patentee of the Fortuny system. In fact, there is little of this system that can be patented, beyond certain details, such as the devices for operating the reflecting screens or lessening the flicker of the lamp. The unpatentable simplicity of the method is Mr. Fortuny's great contribution to the modern stage, and unfortunately for him it is largely a free-will gift.

An arc-lamp and several pieces of cloth of various colours—these comprise the Fortuny apparatus in its simplest form. They are placed above and to the front of the stage, usually on a gallery along which the operator can move freely. The arc-lamp throws its rays away from the stage. In front of the lamp is a frame containing five slides—the five pieces of silk cloth—which can be lowered in front of the lamp or raised, at the will of the operator. The pieces of cloth are white, black, red, blue and yellow. By proper manipulation of these slides any colours can be obtained in any tint or shade. From the three colours which serve as primaries any colour can be obtained in its normal intensity by simple combination—by the lowering of the red slide, for instance, all the way and the blue half the way, thus producing a combination of red and blue in equal proportions. A tint is produced by lowering the white slide so as to increase the proportion of white light in the combination. To obtain a shade the operator partly lowers the black

slide, thus decreasing the quantity of the reflecting surface and hence the brilliancy of the colour. Three or five apparatuses, each equipped with arc-lamp and slides, are usually required to light a large stage, and there must also be a spot-light behind the scenes to cut off any shadows that might be thrown up-stage by the light from the front. When the theatre is equipped with a Kuppelhorizont the greater part of the light from the silk slides is reflected a second time before it reaches the stage, thus increasing its diffusion and softness.

Mr. Linnebach, head technical inspector of the Court Theatre at Dresden, has invented a modification of the Fortuny system which carries his name. It uses arc-lamps pointed away from the stage, like the Fortuny, but the light is coloured through transparent slides as it comes from the lamps, and the reflection is from a blank white wall. When a mixture of the colours is required, the pure colours are given out from the individual lamps, and are mixed on the wall.

The expense of any such system consists chiefly in the operation of the arc-lamps. They must be powerful, and six or eight of them will in an evening burn as much as hundreds of incandescent bulbs. The wiring, of course, is simple. But the Fortuny system can never do without supplementary spot-lamps, and many producers feel that if direct light is going to enter in any way it might as well be used for the whole stage. A stage, in fact, can be lighted altogether with movable spot-lamps placed in the wings. They do not give the subtle softness of indirect light, but the convenience of lamps which can be moved about at will is very great. There is a special technique in the use of these lamps. Such a producer as Reinhardt gets most of his effects

from them. By skilful manipulation, the colour and design of the scene being kept in view, they can be made to yield a matchless brilliancy of effect. They can never get along entirely without footlights (except for occasional special scenes), but these can be kept low and scarcely noticeable. The footlights are indeed not so bad as certain radical theorists would have us believe; the evil of them is chiefly in their abuse, when they are kept going full tilt. They can be dispensed with if there is some sort of indirect system of illumination. But if they are used they can be used moderately and with discretion.

The Fortuny system can be used with a simple Rundhorizont or cloth cyclorama, although with some limitations. In set interiors, with a roof let down from the flies, its soft glow is especially useful. Often, in exterior scenes, there will appear a noticeable shadow thrown by part of the setting against the cyclorama. This must be obliterated by means of another carefully modulated light thrown on the darkened surface.

Even though a manager have no Fortuny apparatus at his disposal he need not be content with the disagreeable glare which American stages use. A brilliantly lighted stage is a convention pure and simple, maintained largely because the audience can imagine no other way and because the "star" wishes to exhibit her facial charms (usually not hers, at that, but the make-up man's). A modulated spot-light played from behind the scenes will, with careful stage planning, give the scene a pleasing softness of tone, and vastly more reality and perspective. In any case the footlights can be kept low and used with some artistic sense of their colour and tone values, while special unnoticeable spot-lights are used for the upper part of the stage. Such

a scheme of lighting, if tastefully used in connection with the colour systems of Mr. Pevear or Mr. Urban, or something equivalent, will go far toward approximating the magic of the Fortuny. Even with such mechanical means as are already in use, American stage lighting can be changed utterly. It requires only taste and care.

The Fortuny system is applicable in a great variety of ways: First of all it will fill the place of the old footlights in illuminating the stage. If nothing more is required the lighting machine will usually be hung well forward, just above the proscenium opening, and a little to one side. Special lights (diffuse or direct) can be operated from the wings, through a window or in any other way. (It is quite possible to use lights from two directions, but only one should be obvious.) A third sort of lighting which is coming more and more into use is the transparent lighting, in which the illumination comes wholly or partly through a semi-transparent back drop. In this case we gain a further diffusion, usually in colour, besides a strange sense of living-ness in the background. The lighting in Ottomar Starke's settings for Gluck's "Orpheus" was achieved wholly in this way. Further, there are the occasional special sorts of light, such as that from torches, etc., which may carry all or part of the lighting under certain conditions.

The whole course of stage lighting in the last ten years has tended toward less light, even approaching a dark stage at times. A darkened stage used to be unthinkable to the old producers, except for special effects of "spooks" and night. To a certain extent their instinct was right, for the elimination of the one bright spot in the hypnotic chamber is liable to set the

attention adrift. But on the whole the modified light and the masses of shade have become almost inseparable from modern production, and their artistic value is paramount. A darkened stage will make more effective any light used, and will give that softness of outline and the restfulness to the eye which were lacking under the old régime. This is especially true under the Fortuny system, which can modulate its shades with the greatest delicacy and place its light exactly where it chooses. It is only the completely darkened stage that is dangerous, and this can sometimes be used with striking effect if the dramatic interest can be powerfully sustained.

Stage light, as we have said, should in general come from but one direction at one time. Some European theatres also use the footlights, turned very low, to raise the tone value of the whole scene, but this practice, which is falling out of use, is merely for the purpose of making the stage visible and is not in the true sense lighting. For true lighting is that which makes solid figures plastic. It is this sort of light which we feel to be *light*, and not mere illumination, and which does the work of light in the real world.

And lighting, used in this way becomes surprisingly rich in artistic effects. It is with the producer at every turn to give his work reality, beauty, and vigour.

When one sees for the first time a well-planned and well-executed German stage-setting one is at a loss to analyse its peculiar charm. It does not consist primarily in the clean, well ordered lines and surfaces, nor in the beauty of its harmonious colouring. The peculiar charm, as of the soul of the thing, is strangely baffling. That charm consists, of course, in the lighting. It seems to an American imagination so impossible that a

stage should be other than glaring white, that one does not dream of looking for the explanation in the lighting. Yet the lighting is the groundwork of all its magic.

The light of nature is never (at least in temperate climates) a mere glare. The sun itself may be blinding, but the sunlight which reaches our eyes from the scene is reflected from soft, modulated, and usually darkened objects of many kinds. It is softened with innumerable shades and tones and colours. It is in these subtle tones that we feel a sense of distance in a landscape. It is in delicate modulations of light and dark that we perceive a human body to be solid and plastic. The light which makes figures and landscapes live on the stage is the light which allows shadings and modulations. The light of the "foots" on the American stage has no deeper purpose than that of a burglar's flash-lamp to render an object *visible*. We want not only visibility on our stage, but also illusion. This illusion, obtained by means of soft reflected light from one direction, is what makes the German stage picture seem so strangely beautiful.

In exterior scenes soft natural lighting gives with remarkable illusion the sense of distance and perspective. In interior scenes it makes canvas very wood and stone, and human beings living creatures in their world of reality or fancy. In both cases the stage picture seems a living work of art—harmonious, unified, satisfying. Instead of paining the eyes, as in the American theatre, it seems to rest them, and, as it were, feed and nourish them.

But natural artistic lighting can do more than make living things seem living. It can, in more poetical pieces, actually make lifeless things seem part of the

STREET SCENE FROM "ROMEO AND JULIET," DEUTSCHES THEATER, BERLIN
An example of Reinhardt's early realistic style.

living drama, as Appia has done in his settings of the Wagner music-dramas. Trees and stones and castles seem to partake of the mood of the play and change and grow with it—now mysteriously and foreboding, now hard and relentless.

But it will be asked, "Why make the stage-setting—rocks and trees—*living?*" Appia's answer to this was one of his peculiarly pregnant contributions to modern stage theory. A music-drama, he said (and the theory had been advanced by Nietzsche before him) is generated from music. The music might be called the soul or the will of the drama and the action and the setting its external phenomena—the concrete things by which the inner will makes itself known. The music is a dynamic, constantly moving thing. The whole of the resultant drama should therefore grow and develop with the action, gathering the audience into its inner purpose. When we are in this wonder-world where the changing soul of things is made visible to us, rocks and trees can properly take on different moods with the story they express. Hence Appia would have no part of the drama lifeless. He would have the background always in harmony with the action, and unobtrusively expressive of it, so that the action can be thrown into the foreground and the actors work with and not against their scenic environment. And here enters the dynamic, hypnotic rôle of lighting. If truly expressive of the mood and subjective meaning of the drama, lighting can seem, in our partial hypnosis, to be its actual motive force. There is a living principle in lighting second only to that of the actor himself. And under good lighting even the rocks and stones seem to burst into song.

In addition to these dramatic functions of lighting

there are certain purely artistic functions which European producers have not been slow to use. Unity, simplicity and design in stage pictures can hardly be achieved without the co-operation of light. The whole scene, consisting of many separate canvases, sets, and properties, can be bound together with a single light from one direction, which emphasises the important and obliterates the unimportant, somewhat as in the typical Rembrandt portrait. And by means of this single light, a producer can gain the simplicity which modern taste demands; a unified scheme of lights and shadows may serve as the central artistic fact around which all details of the picture must be grouped. And lastly, these lights and shadows can be planned to group themselves into a pictorial design.

Imagine the great variety of effect possible in contrasting various masses in size or quality, in showing in light and shade the convolutions of a curtain, in casting across the stage great shadows from the columns of a temple, and so on—and one can see that the pure design which commences with the planning of lines and spaces, can end only in the manipulation of lights.

The preceding paragraphs may have seemed to assume that lights may be used at the pleasure of the producer without reference to their natural justification—that is, regardless of whether there is a sun or a moon or a street-lamp. This would be true, of course, only in the more or less imaginative play. The procedure must be determined by the original conception of the dramatist and producer. A few producers, who claim to reject nature altogether, use their lights in nearly every case wholly with a view to the beauty of the stage effect. But on the whole, if the stage is meant to suggest some part of the real world, lights

must be used as though they were natural. Appia, for instance, as extreme as any in some things, never has the sun set and immediately rise again, merely for the sake of pictorial effect. The trend of production at this time is certainly not toward paying very much attention to nature, and we ought not object to what might be called a liberal interpretation of nature, for the sake of beauty of effect. But beautiful lighting is just as possible in strict realism, where truth to nature is rigidly observed, as in imaginative pieces. It is a matter of using a good diffuse light and arranging your scenery to receive it. In a case at the other extreme, as for instance the Hades scenes from "Orpheus," there is surely no objection to using lights only with a view to their effect, since it is understood that the lighting system in Hades is at best arbitrary. Of the innumerable variations between these extremes it may be said in general that arbitrary lighting is permissible so long as it does not conflict obviously with such natural demands as are specifically made by the play.

Lighting, which was formerly a mere necessary nuisance in dramatic production, has come to be one of the most important forces in the modern theatre. Its possibilities for making stage art supple and expressive are almost boundless. No other element of stage production will yield so much in return for a little care and artistic sense. No reason—except stupidity—remains for the ugly and lifeless illumination used on the American stage. Expert knowledge and trained artistic sense on the part of a few producers or their subordinates could, through lighting alone, produce a new birth of beauty in our theatre.

CHAPTER VII

THE ARTISTIC FORCES: STYLISATION

THE tendency which has come in the last ten years to be called "Stylisation" is just what its name implies, the development of *style* in stage settings. Now style, as an artist uses the word, is hard to define. And the artist is not above making a virtue of his failing by saying that style *shouldn't* be defined, and can't be anyway, except by stupid people. Style, to the artist, is a quality which can be got only through the artistic sense. It has a meaning only when one has a highly developed taste. And the artists are perfectly right, style cannot be defined and can be appreciated, if at all, only directly.

This is because style is the *manner* of executing a work of art, as contrasted with the work itself; and since each true manner is part and parcel in the work there are simply too many *manners* for one definition. But style is still more; it is manner in the eulogistic sense. One rarely hears an artist say: "He has a bad style." An artist either has a style or he hasn't. If he hasn't he has not yet made his art his own, he is a bungler. Moreover, every true style is unique. If one has found one's own manner of doing things—it is no one else's manner. And one's own manner of doing things consists in a multitude of the tiniest peculiarities —it is made up of all the things which are too little to be governed by rule or tradition. Generally it is the work-

"King Lear"—Act I, Scene I, Deutsches Theater, Berlin
An example of Reinhardt's more recent suggestive style.

ing artist who best knows the laws and traditions of his art and therefore he who best knows which are the personal things. For this reason the artist is in a measure justified in considering the appreciation of style in works of art as his own peculiar property.

"Style" as applied to stage-settings means something less subtle than this. It is used to express the individuality of the work rather than that of the worker. It says, not "Let every stage producer have his own style," but, "Let every stage production have its own style." But still, style on the stage is essentially the same thing as style in the studio, since it emphasises the way of doing a thing rather than the thing done.

"Not Realism; but Style," cries Gordon Craig. His meaning is plain: Take what liberties you like with Nature on the stage, but do your work well and thoroughly. Work as a true artist works, letting no detail slip from your attention. Plan every line, every curve, every tiny fold of a curtain, according to your firm design. In this case, be artificial, not natural. Nature has no design in this sense; she does not show the artist's hand; she has no *style*. Why copy Nature, already perfect in her way, if we add nothing of our own in the process? Whatever we create, let it be in every part *our* creation. And people will feel that it was done by a master, and will rejoice that once more an artist is come into the world.

It will be gathered from the above that Stylisation is intended to be a highly personal process. Gordon Craig, the most personal of all modern stage designers, thus describes, in his book "On the Art of the Theatre," how he sets to work on the problem of producing "Macbeth:"

"Let me tell you at the commencement," he says,

"that it is the large and sweeping impression produced by means of this scene and the movement of the figures, which is undoubtedly the most valuable means at your disposal. . . . First and foremost comes the *scene*. It is idle to talk about the distraction of scenery, because the question here is not how to create some distracting scenery, but rather how to create a place which harmonises with the thoughts of the poet.

"Come now, we take *Macbeth*. How does it look, first of all to our mind's eye, secondly to our eye?

"I see two things. I see a lofty and steep rock, and I see the moist cloud which envelopes the head of this rock. That is to say, a place for fierce and warlike men to inhabit, a place for phantoms to nest in. Ultimately this moisture will destroy the rock; ultimately these spirits will destroy the men. Now then, you are quick in your question as to what actually to create for the eye. I answer as swiftly—place there a rock! Let it mount up high. Swiftly I tell you, convey the idea of a mist which hugs the head of this rock. Now, have I departed at all for one-eighth of an inch from the vision which I saw in the mind's eye?

"But you ask me what form this rock shall take and what colour? What are the lines which are the lofty lines, and which are to be seen in any lofty cliff? Go to them, glance but a moment at them; now quickly set them down on your paper: the lines and their direction, never mind the cliff. Do not be afraid to let them go high; they cannot go high enough; and remember that on a sheet of paper which is but two inches square you can make a line which seems to tower miles in the air, and you can do the same on your stage, for it is all a matter of proportion and has nothing to do with actuality.

"You ask about the colours? What are the colours that Shakespeare has indicated for us? Do not look first at Nature, but look in the play of the poet. Two: one for the rock, the man; one for the mist, the spirit. Now, quickly, take and accept this statement from me. Touch not a single other colour, but only these two colours through your whole progress of designing your scene and your costumes, yet forget not that each colour contains many variations. If you are timid for a moment and mistrust yourself or what I tell, when the scene is finished you will not see with your eye the effect you have seen with your mind's eye, when looking at the picture which Shakespeare has indicated.

". . . I know that you are yet not quite comfortable in your mind about this rock and this mist; I know that you have got in the back of your head the recollection that a little later on in the play come several 'interiors' as they are called. But bless your heart, don't bother about that! Call to mind that the interior of a castle is made from the stuff which is taken from the quarries. Is it not precisely the same colour to begin with? and do not the blows of the axes which hew out the great stones give a texture to each stone which resembles the texture given it by natural means, as rain, lightning, frost? So you will not have to change your mind or change your impression as you proceed. You will have but to give variations of the same theme, the rock—the brown; the mist—the grey; and by these means you will, wonder of wonders, actually have preserved unity. Your success will depend upon your capacity to make variations upon these two themes; but remember never to let go of the main theme of the play when searching for variations in the scene."

Finally, Mr. Craig has this to say: "I let my scenes

grow out of not merely the play, but from broad sweeps of thought which the play has conjured up in me."

All that is essential in modern stylisation is here—the endeavour to grasp the whole, to discover its inner meaning, to reveal its unity and purpose, to select the essential and repeat it constantly with fitting variations, to suggest rather than to reveal, to work, above all, with the imagination and the poetic sense.

But while all this suggests the way the stylist producer works, it by no means describes his "method." To him every problem is unique. His results are so variable in their external appearance, that it would be useless to try to group them under one description. Their kinship is shown only by two characteristics: selection instead of imitation, and suggestion instead of representation. But while these are common to all stylists at the present time, all other factors can differ as widely as the personalities of the producers. Almost any sort of "motif" may serve. A producer may "stylise" from externals, such as the architecture of the period, or the stiffness of its manners, or even the lines of its costumes. Or he may stylise from some mere dramatic peculiarity, as when the Weimar Court Theatre planned every detail of its "Hamlet" setting from the postulate that it should be performed rapidly without cuts. Or he may try to show in the setting the essential conflict of the play, as in Craig's "Macbeth." Or, as in a recent stylisation of Wagner's "Rienzi" at Leipzig, he might show the conflict between pagan Rome and Christian Rome, such as they were at the time. Or he may try to make the whole setting contain the dominant mood of the play, as in Gordon Craig's "Hamlet," "a lonely soul in a dark place," or in "Brand," suggesting how the rugged magnifi-

cent beauty of the fiords expresses the uncompromising moral nature of the hero. Or he may try merely to harmonise the conflicting picture of the various scenes by emphasising what is common to all or by suppressing the conflicting elements. Or he may, of course, merely simplify from pure joy in simplicity, or conventionalise from the artist's pleasure in design. Stylisation as used just now refers to all these procedures, permitting all stageworthy "motifs," whatever their source.

On the whole we may say that the guiding ideas in stylisation are two: the synthetic and the subjective. The one looks to form, seeking to attain unity; the other looks to inner content, seeking to attain expression. The two may, of course, be present together, and may (and probably should) completely coalesce. But most stylised settings of the present time are easily recognisable as either the one or the other.

Every play, even one by Ibsen, is made up of certain externally inharmonious elements—different sorts of scenes, very dissimilar costumes, tragic and comic passages, short scenes gapping great intervals of time, and the like. Synthetic stylisation has made it its business to harmonise these elements and to create out of dissimilar factors a unified whole. It seeks to accomplish this by the selection and emphasising of the significant. Beside the great central fact of the struggle between witches and humans in "Macbeth" minor inharmonies sink in indifference. Beside the rugged grandeur of Brand's character, eloquent in every scene, the lapse of months or years between acts is unnoticeable. Beside the religious dignity which ever broods over the play of "Everyman" its naïve mingling of life and death, of material and abstract qualities, is nothing.

By seizing our imagination with a few bold strokes stylisation overshadows the incongruities and dissipations of the drama with its central reality.

Subjective or "expressive" stylisation involves a quite new idea—that the stage setting, as a work of art in itself, should express the dominant mood or emotion of the play. To the artist the mere representation of objects is not expression; the objects, the outer phenomena, are merely the means of expression. So it is not enough to show the queen's chamber in "Hamlet." We must make it express the mood of sin and retribution which overhangs the scene. Only examples of good work can explain how physical objects and lines and surfaces can suggest these inner qualities. But (to return to our stock examples) just as the vanishing lines of the Gothic cathedral may suggest, by common consent, aspiration, or as a dark, oppressive mass may suggest terror or mystery, so the conventionalised stage-settings suggest their poetical meanings. And the dramatic value of such expression is very great. With all the turnings and twistings of Hamlet's spirit it is none too easy for us to discover just what is the trouble. Such an interpretation as that in Gordon Craig's setting may illuminate the whole play for us. Beneath the visible action and the palpable motives of any dramatic character there are larger forces and meanings, which can never be logically expressed, since the dramatic work appeals rather to sympathy and experience than to reason. The whole tendency of the dramatic movement in the last thirty years has been to get deeper and deeper beneath the visible surfaces of men, and stylisation is its logical outcome.

Lighting is one of the all-important means to styl-

ised effect. If the setting is to accommodate itself to the internal progress of the drama it will have to avoid painting too much on the scenery. The only means of producing development and variation in the scene is that of lighting. With the modern inventions nearly all problems of colouring, and even of design itself, can be solved by means of lights. The white cyclorama, for instance, can take any colour. A distant view painted on a "back drop" must not have too definite colours of its own if its tone is to vary in the course of the scene, but must be prepared, in one way or another, to throw back various colours as successive lights are thrown on it. The imaginative setting can take most of its colouring from the lights. Usually no more than half the colour is painted; its supplementary part being supplied by the lights. Or else all the desired colours are painted on the surface, according to the pointillage or the mixed colour systems already described. By manipulating this variable factor of light the whole picture will vary gradually as though a new scene had been substituted. Lighting is naturally one of the chief aids to the imaginative producer, and it is not surprising that lighting on the modern stage has received its highest development at the hands of the stylists.

We can trace stylisation from three separate sources, a brief history of which will give an excellent notion of the inner story of the new stage movement. These three influences are not conflicting or rival factors in any well defined sense, but they still represent three more or less distinct spirits in contemporary stage practice.

Most European producers trace their artistic paternity back to Gordon Craig. This man, though he

has done little actual producing, has been probably the most powerful influence in the modern theatre. And it is to be noticed that he came into stage work from outside, as the artist and designer.

Not that Gordon Craig had no "stage sense"—quite the contrary. He is a son of the actress Ellen Terry, and played minor Shakespearian parts for eight years in Henry Irving's company, also doing the "star" rôles in the provinces for a time. It was in 1898, that is, when he was twenty-six years old, that he first seriously took up drawing and wood engraving. His friends among the actors told him he was a good artist; his friends among the artists told him he was a good actor. He himself had become disgusted with the elaborate nonsense of the English stage and was inclined to stick to designing, which had just received one of its periodical infusions of "new" spirit. But a certain group of artistic friends urged him to combine the two—to bring the art of pure design to the service of the stage. Once convinced, he went into the work with the sort of energy that makes more enemies than friends. In the early 1900's he staged three operas for the Purcell Stage Society. In 1903 he produced Ibsen's "The Vikings" for his mother—an "artistic success, but financial failure." In 1904 he produced a version of Otway's "Venice Preserved" in Berlin. In 1906 he produced for Elenora Duse Ibsen's "Rosmersholm" at the Pergola Theatre in Florence. This list includes most of the productions which bear his name. He was engaged for a number of others, but his principle that "the producer must be the autocrat" nearly always brought friction into the theatre, resulting in his walking out in the early stages of rehearsal. Still these abortive efforts left in some of the best theatres on the

Photograph by Fischer, Moscow

SCENE FROM TCHEKOFF'S "THE CHERRY ORCHARD"
Realism at the Moscow Art Theatre.

continent the memory of his stimulating plans and designs, and the producers were not slow to take advantage of them (nor are they slow in Germany to give the credit where it belongs). In the meantime exhibitions of Craig's designs had been held in Berlin, Vienna, Munich, Dresden, Weimar, London, Rotterdam, and Florence, and had left in each of these centres the stimulus which a study of his work always brings. About the same time Craig published his dialogue (later expanded into a good sized book) "On the Art of the Theatre," which was translated into German, Dutch, Russian, and Japanese. Shortly afterward he founded the monthly magazine "The Mask," published in Florence, which has stood ever since for the "extreme left wing" of the artistic stage movement.

After some five years of this sort of germination came one practical clinching triumph, the fame of which has gone over the whole theatrical world. The Art Theatre of Moscow, under Stanislavsky, engaged Craig to prepare designs for a production of "Hamlet." The designs were made, submitted, and studied. At the general conference the designer discovered that he had a most remarkable theatre to deal with—a theatre which *understood.* He was told that the time of production was uncertain, but that he would be informed of it later. Two years later he was invited to the first performance. This was how and why the only "Craig play" of recent years succeeded in reaching performance. The story is at least symbolic: the ideas of the recent stage movement have been in great part Craig's; the execution has been the work of others. Now, through private donation, he has established a "school for the art of the theatre" in Florence, in which selected young men are working as in a laboratory to

"discover the laws" which govern beauty and expression in the theatre. His two books are being circulated widely and his influence is decidedly growing.

Craig's theories are, if possible, the most fearsome thing about him. "Do not look at Nature," he says: "Look in the play of the poet." "Not realism, but style." "No personalities," he continues in effect, "but Art." He wants not dramatic action, in our sense, but rather the spectacle of the dance. He insists that the theatre will come back to the masks of the Greeks, or preferably to a rumoured movable mask of the Japanese. To save the theatre, we must destroy it. Shakespeare, he assures us, was written to be read, not to be acted. He has produced Shakespeare, so he knows. But if we must produce "Julius Cæsar," say, let us not try to represent the Roman Forum (or our idea of it) but show, for that scene, simply "a man speaking to a hundred thousand men!" He uses majestic curtains with great lines and masses, to suggest not a place, but a mood. He has invented and patented a set of mechanical screens, rectangular in shape and hinged together, applicable to almost any play, which can be set up in innumerable combinations, so as to form a pure design in right angles and surfaces, so played upon by the lights as to give great variety of effect. His variety of invention is amazing, his frank inconsistency astonishing, and his stimulation almost inexhaustible.

A satisfactory outline of Craig's theories it will be impossible to get. They exist, like the philosophy of Confucius, in aphorisms. It is Craig's designs which do him full justice, and it is they, rather than his theories, which have gained him the immense respect and influence which he now enjoys.

Max Reinhardt represents the practical theatre

man. He did not leave the theatre in disgust, like Craig, but pulled it up with him. He did not so much bring art bodily *to* the theatre as make the theatre develop itself into an art. His line represents something less definite than either of the other two, but something more synthetic, more immediately practicable.

Reinhardt was discovered by the great realistic producer, Brahm, in a little company in Salzburg, and was engaged as an actor for minor parts at Brahm's Deutsches Theater in Berlin (where he has since made his reputation). Like Brahm, like many of the best workers in the German theatre, he is a Jew. He showed, in addition to the usual routine ability, a keen head for business, besides a disconcerting aptitude for new ideas. For two years he tested out his own ability in the Kleines Theater, where he gave performances of Wilde's "Salomé" and Maxim Gorky's "Nachtasyl" which Berliners still remember. In 1905 he took over the Deutsches, after long continued quarrels with Brahm, who leased the Lessing Theater which he later made the standard of the world for strict realistic acting. Since then Reinhardt's rise in international reputation has been rapid and steady. After Berlin had become the imperial capital of Germany it was he who made it also the theatrical capital; and it is chiefly he who represents the new German inscenierung in the eyes of other nations.

Reinhardt's work has been of many widely divergent kinds and this is perhaps his chief claim to greatness. His Shakespeare, though sometimes debatable on certain points, stands to-day as the model for Germany and for the whole world. Comedy, history, and tragedy under him are equally potent and equally individual.

His settings are rather conservative, being always in some degree "representative," and usually much like any other good producer's settings, only better done. Easily, yet never too obviously, he gets exquisite effects of pure design and harmonious "discreet" colour. Fanciful plays, such as the famous "Sumurun," he mounts with a nerve and a firmly controlled vigour that are irresistible. The rigidly realistic plays, such as Hebbel's "Maria Magdelene" or Tolstoy's "The Living Corpse," while never overlooking mere beauty of setting, receive such care in the minute mirroring of nature that it seems impossible to go farther. Comic opera (at the Künstlertheater in Munich) he mounts with a fantasy and an eye for the picturesque that makes the dead jests live again. And finally (if there is a finale to his activities) he has created for the modern world the epic spectacle. The famous "Œdipus Rex," first given some four years ago at Munich and Berlin, established the soundness of the "epic theatre" idea in modern cities, and now a group of capitalists is building for Reinhardt the "Theatre of the Five Thousand" which will doubtless test out the idea thoroughly and put the results at the disposal of other cities and nations.

In all this variety it is not easy to describe the style of the settings. If their nature can be suggested in one sentence it would be to say that they are the old familiar settings made more solid in structure, more beautiful in design, and more harmonious in colour. Yet while Reinhardt is not revolutionary after the fashion of Gordon Craig, he justly deserves his reputation as one of the leaders in the modern movement. His settings, though perhaps not "new" in their broadest outline, have synthesised much of the best experimental work of others. It must be remembered, too, that the

Photograph by Fischer, Moscow

SCENE FROM "TSAR FEODOR IVANOVITCH." BY ALEXANDER TOLSTOY

An example of the settings for historical plays at the Moscow Art Theatre.

success of the Reinhardt régime is due not more to his far-famed settings than to the incomparable acting of his company. Early in his directorship Reinhardt developed an eye for the best actors, ability to get and keep them, and willingness to pay them well, and this genius of his has gone far toward making nearly every one of his productions a triumph.

There is something in the Russian genius wholly unknown to us. It seems like the fresh power of national youth springing up while we of the West are living on our past. That ability to rise out of a wallowing of imitation, to see a vision, and then, without delay but with infinite labour, to go straight to it, seems a sign of another age than ours—it seems the typical characteristic of the very greatest ages in history, of which there are not more than half a dozen: the Hellenic, the Italian Renaissance, the Elizabethan, and which else?

It is this quality of rapidity and youthful self-dependence which has astonished us in the Russians' stage work of the last half dozen years. Whether it is better than ours is not yet to be determined; that it is more radical, simple, wonderful, is not to be doubted. Not that Russia is a torchbearer of civilisation; far from it. But when she flashes she seems to flash more brilliantly than any other nation. In theatrical work Russia has only two centres of international importance (yet how many has France, or England, or America?): The Stanislavsky Art Theatre in Moscow, and the Imperial Opera House and Theatre at St. Petersburg. The latter is known to the West through the Russian ballets and operas which its companies have taken on tour; the former is known through one brief trip into Germany and stray pictures of its productions of "The

Blue Bird" and of Gordon Craig's "Hamlet." But these revelations have left their permanent impression.

The history of the Moscow centre is most valuable. Russian history is more homogeneous than that of any other nation; and that of the Moscow theatre reveals a very close texture of cause and effect while taking some of the strangest turns imaginable. First be it known that the Moscow Art Theatre, now thought of as the very cradle of elfin fantasy, started out, in the nineties, by trying to be more realistic than any other theatre on earth. That had been the Russian tradition for fifty years; moreover it was then the fashion in the West, and it has ever been the Russian custom to take Western fashions more strenuously than the West itself does. The same ambition led the Berlin Lessing Theater into partial stagnation; it led the Moscow Art Theatre into the most daring decorations and the most "psychological" intimacy in the whole world of the theatre.

It should be made clear that it was not any artistic failure in realism that made the theatre change its tack. Stanislavsky, a wealthy dilettante and superb actor, had brought to his playhouse plenty of money and an abundance of sincerity and ability. As a realistic theatre the institution fulfilled its highest pretensions. It soon arrived at the point where it could rest on its reputation or do what else it pleased. It was the directors and actors themselves who were dissatisfied with realism.

"We arrived at absurdity," one of the experimenters puts it, "because we tried to put into the scene 'the fourth wall.'" Realism, that is, must founder somewhere, because drama is, after all, a thing of conventions.

But the strange thing is that it was not a reaction against realism that led the Art Theatre into its heyday of imaginative vigour. These Russians did not recoil before the mountain that opposed them; they burrowed through it—and came out on the other side.

In trying to become "more realistic,"—that is, deeper beneath superficials and closer to the heart of life—the typical Stanislavsky plays, such as those of Tchekoff and Maxim Gorky, cast off even the convention of dramatic movement; the result being "immobile drama," or "pure dramatic design." There remained only the characters and the ceaseless interplay of souls, which was precisely what the Art Theatre had dedicated itself to in the first place.

Just as realism had been approaching man more and more closely, so these experimenters sought to sound man more and more deeply. But here they discovered (it must have been with strange feelings) that they had obtained all there was to be got out of realism, and that the innermost reality, "the essential in the character's state of soul," was still too profound to be expressed without some further means. For these deepest things they must use symbolism—line and mass, poetic effect, and colour. They had come out on the other side of the mountain; they had entered, by their own way, into the modern stage movement.

In 1904 the Stanislavsky group, joined by a new recruit from the south, a certain Wsewold Meyerholdt, organised an experimental theatre, or rather a theatrical laboratory, which they called the Theatre Stoudia. Here, in miniature, they solved the problems which they were later to work out on the actual stage. They made pasteboard models of the stage and of all details of the scene. "When we had these," says Meyer-

holdt, "we had the whole modern theatre in our hands."

The shock of the Manchurian defeat had broken up the Theatre Stoudia with its high plans for the future. But Meyerholdt, having quarrelled on artistic grounds with Stanislavsky, went up to St. Petersburg, where he found the employment he sought in conducting an art theatre belonging to a certain Madame Kommissarzewskaia, now deceased. Here he worked out finally the unspeakably brilliant methods which five years later he carried triumphantly into the Imperial Opera House, as chief regisseur.

Stanislavsky, in the meantime, had followed out his lines of advance. Having established the tender Tchekoff as an epoch point in Russian dramatic history, he applied the brilliancy of his barbaric colour method to the Russian historical plays, and then planned for international success. He was the first to produce Maeterlinck's "The Blue Bird," and his production has remained the standard for beauty, and unapproachable in daring. Then, as has been described, came the Craig "Hamlet" and a name which now works magic among the nations.

Stanislavsky, by all reports, has developed the most magnificent acting machine in the world. The basis of this excellence, it is agreed, is the living wage. Each actor receives a decent salary and assurance of permanence, and the chief actors share in the profits, as under the Comédie Française system. New members are received only after long probation and study; when they are received they are regarded as responsible artists and co-workers. Plays are studied at a "round table." Each member's opinion is of value. Rehearsals continue until perfection has been obtained. In passing let us mention one of the "huge little things" that make

institutions great—the theatre serves luncheon to its actors during rehearsals at the noon hour.

The Art Theatre, having practised successfully at the two poles of art, can still keep its motto: "To seize the essential in the state of soul." Here is the root of its stylisation—subjective expression. More potently than any other, the Moscow Theatre can use stark suggestion. More boldly than any other, it knows how to use pure colour. Like Reinhardt, it knows no limits of variety; unlike Reinhardt, it knows not the limits of "discretion."

Stylisation is not the triumphant movement which one might suppose after a glance at the field. It has serious internal difficulties, and none know the fact better than the stylists themselves. In the first place, just as realism must wreck on the conventions of the drama, so unrestrained conventionalism must wreck on the life-content of the drama. But more serious, a thorough stylisation will usually try to change the play to suit the setting. Given nearly any good play which calls for some degree of variety in the settings, and varied it will remain in spite of the best stylising. If the producer denies this and seeks to make his work *thorough*, he is very sure to twist his play into something quite different and quite undesirable. His only escape is to write plays for stylisation, which is just what the more extreme producers are crying for. But we cannot help believing that drama wrenched so far from its life purpose for the benefit of the artistically initiated, will soon have but a sorry audience—"must at last," to borrow the words of William Morris, "become too precious a thing for even the hands of the initiated to touch, whereupon the initiated must sit still and do nothing, to the grief of no one."

The truth is, stylisation, for the practical purpose of the stage, must be a compromise. It can bring order out of disorder, purpose out of incompetence, meaning out of stupid imitation. It can answer to our awakened sensitiveness in all parts of the art of drama. But it is by its own postulate opposed to nature, and this fault will become more serious as stylisation matures. It must not be allowed to shut out the access of the drama to life—to the life of the streets or of the flesh—which is the well whence art ever draws new draughts of vigour.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ARTISTIC FORCES: MODERN SCENE DESIGNING IN AMERICA

THE application of modern principles of scene designing in American work is a thing of very recent years. It can hardly be said to have arisen from the demand of audiences for more beautiful settings, for American audiences have demanded little beyond realism and sumptuousness in theatrical scenery. The careful and skilful realism of Mr. Belasco has been the American ideal. This is decidedly not without artistic merit, but an artist would probably find Belasco settings cluttered with unpurposed detail. Beyond their desire for illusion in the theatre American audiences have shown a taste for elegance of a somewhat obvious kind, and theatrical managers have competed with one another in expensive settings ever since Clyde Fitch paid $2,500 for a solid wood set for "The Climbers." These American tastes, of course, are not necessarily reprehensible. The point is that they would not be those of a trained artist.

The desire for more simple and artistic stage settings in America has grown up chiefly from the work of a few artists who were enthusiastic over European work. Reinhardt's pantomime, "Sumurun," which fascinated and shocked American audiences several seasons ago, first opened the eyes of the general public to the possibilities of artistic stage-setting, and the various com-

panies of Russian dancers, chiefly that of Madame Pavlova, have contributed to arousing interest. Gordon Craig's books, too, have had some little circulation in America, and have stimulated interest if not a clear understanding of the author's intentions. The definite demand for settings in the "new manner" was felt only among the audiences of a few experimental theatres scattered here and there throughout the land. As for the "general public," it has been made mildly receptive by what it has seen, but in no wise discontented with the usual American scene.

Among the individual artists the chief influences have been Gordon Craig and Max Reinhardt. The artists who are very serious about it are nearly all young men, men who have been interested in art first and the theatre afterward, who have travelled or lived in Europe and felt the enthusiasm which comes over any sensitive soul in Continental playhouses. Their openings in the commercial theatre have hitherto been few. They had little independent prestige, and managers have not been anxious to allow unknown men to spend time and money on what seemed likely to be only "queer." Miss Anglin is, in America, undoubtedly the pioneer among managers. Having discovered Mr. Platt and his work in Boston, she gave him free hand to design her Shakespearian settings, and received no small amount of recognition for her courage.

Mr. Livingston Platt, who gained his reputation through her recognition, lived for some years in Bruges, Belgium, working and studying at art. There he organised a little English company of actors which toured through the neighbouring cities giving the best modern English plays. Inevitably he came to designing and painting scenery for these plays, and his originality

was recognised by the Intendant of the municipal theatre, who invited him to design settings for "Romeo and Juliet." His success in this, with his radical methods of simplification and suggestion, led to a closer connection with the Bruges theatre. After his return to America Mr. Platt worked with Mrs. Lyman Gale in the experimental Toy Theatre of Boston, achieving wonders in colour and lighting on its tiny stage. About the same time he was engaged to do several Shakespearian settings for Mr. John Craig, of the Boston Castle Square Theatre, a manager of remarkable ability and foresight. Mr. Craig accepted Mr. Platt's work for its commercial value, and made his experiment pay in the publicity it brought, though the theatre draws only the audience that is attracted by a moderate-priced stock company. The new settings were seen by Miss Anglin on one of her visits to Boston, and after a trial commission or two Mr. Platt was engaged to do all her designing. Some of his very best work, however, has been done for amateur societies of Boston and the vicinity.

Mr. Platt's style is flexible and highly poetic. It is based on the straight line and the flat colour mass, omitting detail except where detail is specifically demanded. His power to make evident the beauty of a harmonious design is marked. His colours incline to the flat and "discreet," but he is not afraid to use brilliant contrast where it will be effective. His stage picture is held firmly within definite outlines. He is not fond of the "atmospheric" effect. Perhaps his chief originality lies in his use of lighting, which he manipulates with expert understanding. He keeps his footlights as low as American theatres and actors will permit, and uses numerous concealed "spots" for local

emphasis with brilliant effect. Moreover he has an equipment in which young designers are apt to be deficient—a wide acquaintance with historical styles and "motives." All in all, he may be considered the most able of the young American designers.

Mr. Josef Urban, who for several seasons has been stage director and designer at the Boston Opera House, came from Vienna, where he had worked at the Royal Opera House. Like most of the radical stage designers, he was not trained for theatrical work. He was an architect of wide reputation before he was attracted to the theatre. His architectural training shows in all his work, which is solid and massive, with vigorous outlines and firm execution. He has given the Boston Opera House several seasons more brilliant by far, in all that concerned the stage, than any other American theatre could boast of. The Metropolitan in New York, for instance, has been quite innocent of the "new manner," except for occasional imported settings or designs such as those of Golovine for "Boris Godounoff," or of Roller for "Der Rosencavalier." Within a few months Mr. Urban's stage settings have been seen for the first time in New York, Chicago, and Paris, and have everywhere made a deep impression. His sense of style is that of the mature artist. Each of his operas has an aura which is distinctive and is duplicated by no other. His settings are not simple, but they make free use of conventionalisation, as in "The Love of the Three Kings," in which one solid and obvious skeleton of design extends through each of the three scenes. He is one of the first in America to make use of the conventional forestage and raised rear-stage. His peculiarity, sometimes an extreme mannerism, is his use of spotted colouring in the manner of the "pointillistes." He

rarely uses a flat surface; the colour is laid on in obvious daubs or "points," which are to some extent bound together into a single tone by the lights. It is a trick frankly borrowed from the easel artist, and, pregnant as it is in atmospheric suggestion, it often accords ill with the very solid and matter-of-fact character of the architectural scene. But Mr. Urban's settings are invariably of fine and dignified beauty, and there is more to be learned from them than from all other American settings put together.

Mr. J. Monroe Hewlett, now associated with Mr. Stevens in the dramatic department of the Carnegie School of Applied Design, made one of the most successful impressionistic settings that has been seen in America. It was the setting for Maude Adams' production of "Chanticler." In it he made extensive use of the much abused gauze drop, but because it was lighted from behind, and especially because it was used by an artist, it became a thing of beauty. Of these forest scenes Mr. Samuel Howe has written:[1] "Extreme judgment is shown in the selection of the points to be accented that dramatic strength be given to the scene. The silhouette outline is the thing of great moment. Balance, centre, proportion, scale, qualities dear to the heart of every architect, pay homage to the scheme, entering into it. The stern rule of rhythm and balance is here, appearing, however, in so new a guise as to escape notice. There is about it great depth and richness, great transparency of shadows and shades, great repose, strange absence of irrelevant and disturbing detail; there is also the remarkable characteristic known in the vocabulary of the artist as—quality. It

[1] In The International Studio, October, 1912.

states facts in a subtle manner. It does not force itself upon the theatrical world with the startling note and wild abandon which has so often momentarily electrified the audience. It pleases because of the far-reaching influence—the infinite tenderness of its illusion, the irresistible winsomness of its portrayal. This gauze, this weaving of a madcap midget, the caprice of a wildly fascinating charmer, is a challenge alike to the imagination, at times revealing all phases of the landscape and again concealing them. It is a mysterious backing to a living theme in which the actor plays the salient part." Mr. Hewlett, be it noted, is one more stage artist who came to the theatre from the outside. He is an architect and artist, and was called upon for help when Miss Adams found herself before a problem beyond the power of professional American scene makers.

The only theatrical man of the older generation who has shown sympathy with the "new manner" and understanding of it, is Mr. J. C. Huffmann. Mr. Huffmann was trained in the ways of the American stage of the nineties, and is a stage director of high standing. But his scenery for Percy MacKaye's "A Thousand Years Ago" gave him a place among the distinguished stage artists of America. The play was written to fit the scenery for Reinhardt's "Turandot," which was expected to be a second "Sumurun" in America. Presently the drama ran away from the scenery and a whole new setting had to be devised. Mr. Huffmann's sympathetic scenes were based on the Reinhardt manner, but were decidedly original in many qualities. They made excellent use of the darkened stage, and showed endless variety in colour contrast. They were the work of a man who was thoroughly familiar with his

stage and was able to obtain a surprising number of effects from the old-fashioned equipment.

Perhaps the most imaginative of the young American designers is Robert E. Jones. The sensitiveness of his artistic feeling shows in every line. But he is not a studio scene-designer, for his feeling for the total effect is vivid and is the basis for all his work. It is often extremely daring, though never vulgar. For instance, he directs, in connection with a design for an interpolated scene for "The Merchant of Venice": "Immediately after the close of the trial scene the curtain rises on this picture: the silhouette of a great bridge along which Shylock passes from right to left, black against a dull red sky, till he is lost to sight in the tangle of masts and ropes. I want this scene to hit your eye, bang! like an enormous poster, and to last but a moment." The scene is done wholly in intense red and deep black! Mr. Jones's work in connection with the Deutsches Theater of Berlin has developed in him a keen sense of the dramatic, which is never absent from his designs, but his originality is shown in what he adds to this—a certain element of otherworldly fancy, a stubborn refusal to let the theatre crowd out the independent artist. For his design for Act I, Scene 2 of "The Merchant of Venice," here reproduced, he directs: "Here you see the sky—and little else. A shallow flight of steps, leading up to a great round window. Curtains at each side, some red and black cushions. Renaissance chairs. Portia and Nerissa in rose and silver, the servant in black. The chairs in this design are ivory." He will render to the theatre the things that are the theatre's. For the rest he is the artist in his own right. No other American scene designer has in this degree the mingling

of theatrical adaptability and independent artistic imagination.

Mr. Samuel Hume, of Cambridge, Mass., for some time associated with Gordon Craig, has designed and made for many amateur productions scenery of remarkable beauty. He is masterly at getting the most nicely adjusted effect with the simplest means. His theories are vigorous and his artistic personality marked, but he rarely repeats himself. He works distinctly from the play outward, and whether for a Japanese, a Restoration or an Elizabethan piece, he always succeeds in giving the production a perfume of its own. His use of colour is free and somewhat that of the easel painter, but the effect it nearly always vigorous and stage-worthy.

Mr. Hume's studio in Cambridge is a type of the artistic impulse which is springing up throughout America. It makes little difference that this impulse is chiefly amateur and has as yet made little impression on the commercial stage. The genuineness of it is proved precisely by the fact that it is amateur. It is only a question of time until the demand for artistic and imaginative settings will make itself felt generally in the professional theatre, and will bring these younger artists to the front rank among American designers.

The vigorous amateur impulse toward the theatre is well illustrated in Professor Baker's activity at Harvard. His course in playwriting is now well known to the general public. The haste of his pupils to reach the professional stage has perhaps hindered the value of this course as an experimental centre, but it is chiefly due to Professor Baker's influence that Cambridge is such a hospitable place for experimental work like Mr. Hume's. Two Harvard undergraduates recently built

a plaster Kuppelhorizont in one of their college rooms, equipping it with a complete lighting system, and building and lighting complete scenes. The effects they obtained were nothing short of marvellous. Professor Baker's influence has been only secondarily directed toward scene designing, for he has had little or no co-operation from the Harvard Fine Arts department, but his sympathy with all the tendencies of the modern theatre has made the air of Cambridge hum with all sorts of experimental ardour. A complete school of dramatic art in all its branches has recently been organised in the Carnegie School of Applied Design in Pittsburgh, under the direction of Professor Thomas Wood Stevens, who is an artist, dramatist, and scholar of great ability. The vigorous co-operation and financial support offered by the School of Applied Design to the new department has given it a breadth and completeness of equipment which Harvard has denied to Professor Baker's work.

The centres of effort toward artistic scene designing in America are too numerous to mention here. But wherever there has been an experimental theatre there has been experimentation in artistic stage-setting. Mrs. Gale's Toy Theatre, of Boston, for instance, put Livingston Platt on the theatrical map. Mr. Browne's Little Theatre in Chicago has obtained fine results by rigid simplification, and the Lake Forest Theatre, under the direction of Mr. and Mrs. Aldis has had imaginative settings of much beauty. Professor Baker's "47 Workshop" in Cambridge has achieved results of real significance, and the unusually lively Dartmouth College Dramatic Society, making and usually designing its own scenery, has shown the influence of recent theatrical art on the young idea.

It must not be supposed from this enumeration that

commercial theatre managers are brutal Philistines, outside the pale of beauty. Unheralded settings for professional productions have often shown a high degree of expressive beauty. The managers have frequently been willing to give generous rewards and great freedom to the artists they employed, but they are business men and cannot afford to risk money on a "freak," at least until the public has shown some demand for it.

It is in gradually arousing this public demand that the experimental centres have been doing their most valuable work. They have been as commercial institutions of art can never be—free to make mistakes and consider the loss a gain. The theatre managers will presently be only too glad to employ the services of artists rather than those of handy-men in their productions. And the experiments of the amateur theatres, often crude and usually incomplete, will have had a goodly share in making this result possible.

SETTING FOR "THE LIFE OF MAN"—ACT II

An example of stylization at the Moscow Art Theatre.

CHAPTER IX

THE INTELLECTUAL FORCES: PHILOSOPHY IN THE MODERN DRAMA

NOW what have the literary men contributed to this theatre? It is obvious at the merest glance that their contribution cannot be classified in any neat category, referred to a definite ideal, explained by a single principle. Modern dramatic literature makes a fool of any lusty literary critic who seeks to sum it up as he would that of classical Greece, Elizabethan England, or Louis Quatorze France. It seems to reveal no single uniformity in point of content, form, or spirit.

Yet this irregularity, this seeming want of purpose or principle, is the very fact we must understand if we would appreciate the contribution of modern dramatic authors. It is not a mere anarchy, a wilful irresponsibility. It is certainly not a causeless accident. It is not a negative thing. Rather it is an expression of the spirit of the time, something that is very like a modern philosophy.

This modern philosophy—*the* modern philosophy—expressed in its broadest terms, is the scientific spirit applied to the study of life. Now the scientific spirit is much more than mere materialism; it need not necessarily be materialistic at all. The layman commonly supposes that the scientific spirit is the attempt to discover the laws of nature. But this is precisely what it

is not. Science properly has nothing whatever to do with laws. It leaves laws to the quacks, the man in the street, or the writers of "popular science" in the monthly magazines. What science bases itself on is the experiment. It commences with Christian humility by assuming that it knows nothing. It regards each fact as a separate, unique thing. It collects thousands, millions of them, arranges them for the convenience of study, notes similarities and uniformities, and then seeks to discover what will happen to given values under given conditions. It makes no generalisation except from the facts observed; what generalisations it makes it holds constantly subject to revision. Darwin never said that men were descended from monkeys; what he said was: "I have here a quantity of data, which presents certain similarities and would seem to indicate that men may be descended from monkeys." It was Huxley—the "popular scientist" par excellence—who made a dogma of monkey-descent; and Huxley, who was forever trying to deduce laws from the data in hand, is now a discredited scientist, at best an entertaining lecturer, a parlour poet.

Now it may safely be said that it is on this question of "law" that modern philosophical controversy hinges. Take the simplest of natural phenomena—the falling of the apple to the ground—and ask yourself "Why?" and you are *instanter* in the centre of a philosophical question. The easy answer is: "The apple falls because it is pulled to the ground by the law or the force of gravity." But it is impossible to give any definite meaning to this "law" or "force." We are not a whit wiser about the falling apple when we have said that the force of gravity "makes" it fall. We are, however, wiser about the phenomenon of falling bodies when we

have discovered, out of a mass of data, that, other things being equal, bodies are attracted to each other in inverse proportion to the square of the distance. The scientist, accordingly, leaves laws out of his calculations, and contents himself with observing and classifying facts. The pseudo-laws which he makes use of in his trade—hypotheses and theories—are not used to explain the facts, but merely to help him study and classify them. His laws are no more than architects' drawings of how certain facts fit together. They do not explain why they fit. Much less are they the forces which make them fit.

Some conception of a law-giving system has generally prevailed in all artistic or literary expression in the past. This or that work of art was beautiful in so far as it accorded with the established "laws" of art, and good in so far as it accorded with the established "principles" of human conduct. In opposition to this the scientific spirit says that a fact is its own authority, independent of any law. Laws are only the expression of the facts; if the facts change the laws must change. The old view saw the world as essentially orderly and only by accident inharmonious; the scientific spirit sees the world as essentially disordered—a chance interaction of individual forces—and only transiently and by accident harmonious.

We see the growth of this scientific spirit in the extensive literature of the "labour and capital" struggle. Mrs. Gaskell's "Mary Barton" was as vigorous as any modern revolutionary pamphlet in condemning the abuses of the English factory system; but the author saw them as incidental abuses, which, once cleared away, would leave the two factors once more in harmony. To her, as to all idealist thinkers, the world was a sort

of picture puzzle, normally fitting together into a perfect whole, in which some of the pieces were at times misplaced. She wanted to be "just" to all sides, so as to fit the puzzle together once more into a perfect whole. This preoccupation for both sides, this desire for ideal fitness, has almost departed from the recent literature on the subject. Hauptmann's "The Weavers" shows the growth of the revolutionary spirit among the Silesian workingmen. The employers are merely incidental in the picture. "This is a fact," Hauptmann seems to say, "good or bad as you choose to take it, but a demonstrable fact." Heierjmanns pleads *ex parte* for the proletariat; the working class is one of the forces in the ceaseless conflict, the force with which he is allied, let the other side look out for itself! Life is no picture puzzle fitted together by a beneficent creator or by an all-wise legislature. Repose is the property of dead things; with the living it is only a passing accident.

It is in this sense that modern dramatic literature takes its rise from facts. Facts are diverse, unordered, only partially related. We become their masters not by fitting them into a classification, but by becoming conscious of them. A dramatic author becomes impressed with this or that fact, an anomaly in the marriage relation or in the war of labour and capital, and casts it into dramatic form in order that it may better come to consciousness. It may or may not accord with our view of what the world ought to be; he takes no responsibility for that. It is simply one of the influences that is shaping the world, and it must force itself on dramatists if they are alive and open-minded. It is this willingness to accept facts as their own authority, rather than a zeal for the general reformation of

GLUCK'S "ORPHEUS"—ACT III, SCENE I. DESIGN BY GOLOVINE
Imperial Opera House, St. Petersburg

See Appendix II

the world, which makes modern dramatic literature seem so wildly bent on changing things. The life about us is violently in process of change; and any art so close to life as the drama is bound to reflect its disordered violence.

The conservative predisposition which makes us reject so much of this literature springs from our habit of thinking in ideals. The reason Ibsen was so disconcerting to us when his plays were new was not that we disagreed with his statements as to the evils of the world but that we felt instinctively that if these things were changed everything else would have to be changed to fit. If one piece in our picture puzzle were displaced, then all the other pieces would have to be altered accordingly. An employer who fights a child labour law probably does so not because he is evil-hearted and happy in the suffering of children, but because he realises that if children are taken out of his industry the whole basis of wages must be rearranged. But with the growth of the scientific spirit in our ordinary thinking processes we come to feel that we are not responsible for the whole of the picture puzzle, being but small parts thereof ourselves, that we can look any number of facts in the face and do what we will or can about them. And when we have realised this we can open our minds and hearts to the whole body of this wonderful modern literature.

A summary outline cannot begin to suggest the immense variety of facts and points of view presented in modern drama. With every author looking at things from a different point of view, with all the facts of life presented as unique and valid in themselves, it is evident that each spectator is overwhelmed with a multitude of claims on his attention that would be beyond

the power of any human being to grant. One cannot be vitally interested in reforming the marriage law and in preserving it intact, in furthering the claims of labour and the contradictory claims of capital, in asserting the supremacy of the flesh and the supremacy of the spirit—all at once. The individual must choose. And he must choose according to what concerns *him*. The question is, not "Which plays do you consider best?" but "Which plays are your favorites?" Once ideals and principles are put in a secondary place the only basis for choosing among the mass of material offered is that of personal needs and preferences. Hence, to meet the individualism in the dramatic output there arises an individualism in the audience. One is privileged to say: "I like this play and dislike that," without adding, "Because this play is good and that bad." In former days it would have been the correct thing to say: "This play is good and that play is bad, hence I like this and dislike that." Now we can only say, if we are fair and open-minded: "This play is good for me." And when we are obliged to make our selection on this personal basis, we find ourselves obliged to find out what our personal likes and dislikes are, what demands we make upon life and our fellow-men, where we put the emphasis in human affairs—in short, what is our working philosophy. And so there develops in any one who takes modern drama at all seriously a demand for taking stock of his relation to life, of his place as an individual. This is the great working-out of the *philosophy* of modern drama.

And with this individualism in dramatic content there comes a great freedom in the matter of form. On this rock many a good theorist has gone to smash. It is altogether too easy to choose some ready-made

standard by which to judge all plays. In the attempt to be impersonal and just to all works of art one is obliged to accept some initial dogma, which is thereupon given the name of "artistic principle," "fundamental law," or "essential dramatic value." Such dogmas pretend to base themselves on some eternal principle, some peculiarity of human psychology, some fact concerning dramatic action, or perhaps on some arbitrary ideal of beauty, such as unity or economy of means. In point of fact they all base themselves on concrete works of art, known and admired. Aristotle, supposed inventor of the Three Unities, was consciously only summing up and describing the dramatic works he was familiar with. Modern theorists do the same thing, only unconsciously. The cult of Ibsen has taken a dogmatic turn toward formalism. Because Ibsen managed to squeeze the last drop of dramatic effect out of his materials, theorists assume that all good plays must do the same thing, that any detail in a play not strictly concerned with the main action is a fault. They ordain that drama is the "conflict of wills," that what is not conflict is not drama; that talk for its own sake is undramatic and hence has no place on the stage; that art has no business being didactic, and hence that any plan that means anything dynamic in terms of life is at fault—"a good sermon but a bad play." And much more of the same sort. Armed with such dogmas the theorists arrive at fearful and wonderful results. In consistent dramatic conflict "Faust" is one of the worst plays ever written. In formal unity Tolstoy is a bungler. In acting value much of Granville Barker is the work of a fool. Well enough to pronounce Goethe an amateur, Tolstoy a bungler, and Barker a fool, if it gives you pleasure. But

it is only your personal luxury, quite without objective meaning. You have completely and childishly missed the point.

A hasty study of modern drama will convince any one that conflict of wills, formal unity, logical sequence and the like, were among the last things the authors were driving at. And it must appear foolish to a thinking man grandly to adjudge the great dramatists of the age as bunglers at their trade because they haven't done what some theorist wanted them to do, but what they never intended to do. If we are to get the true value of these authors we must do it descriptively not critically. The principle does not include the facts, it is only a reflection of the facts. Dramas were made first, and the "laws of drama" afterward.

In the dreary discussion of what is and what is not a play Granville Barker's curt statement stands out as the conclusion of the whole matter: "A play," he says, "is anything that can be made effective upon the stage of a theatre by human agency. And I am not sure that this definition is not too narrow." Needless to say, this book accepts the statement without reservation, and will endeavour, in the following chapters, to discover what modern dramas have, not what they have not.

CHAPTER X

THE LITERARY FORCES: FRENCH AND ITALIAN DRAMATISTS

THE modern French drama, more than any other, shows us the power of a tradition. Tradition is an abused word; it has been used eulogistically so long by aristocratic and conservative partisans, that in our democratic age we have come to regard it as a term of reproach. But like most other things it is in itself neither a good nor an evil; it is simply a fact. But having been used so freely to bolster a losing cause, it has appeared to us as a stupid, superficial thing, an evil spirit which says "don't" and is powerless to add anything to the sum total of human values. It has seemed to be a law expressed in stupidity instead of in statute books. But a living tradition is never to be learned in set terms, it is not codified, it is not a body of doctrine. It lives in men's hearts. It is perpetuated not by teaching but by example. It is most powerful when it is least conscious. It is not rigid but as variable and flexible as men themselves. It is not law grown decrepit, but human conduct not yet ossified into law. It is that by which men understand each other without words. It is what makes people give honest measure even when they couldn't be found out. It is what makes men loyal to a prince when there are no armies to compel them. It is the

soul of a custom, imitated from father to son and from neighbour to neighbour, by which men adapt themselves to each other without making a special compact with each. It changes gradually, as men change, with their mutual relations, sensitively reflecting each new need, until it becomes cold and dead expressed in formulas in the consciousness of men. A living tradition is the cohesive force of societies, beneath and beyond the law which imperfectly expresses it.

France has always had such a tradition, in one stage or another of decay or rejuvenation. The earliest of the great centralised kingdoms of Europe, it was obliged to work out the relation of the parts to the whole and set up in a Paris registry of all that was passing in the provinces. Paris became the clearing-house of France, and all changes throughout the kingdom could be checked off, one against the other, at the capital. France's governmental system was always highly imperfect, until the coming of the Code Napoléon. But France felt a national unity as Italy, Germany, and even Spain never did. And to-day there is no nation which feels so sensitively every subtle variation in public opinion as France. French freedom of speech, far in advance of American, is not due to governmental enactment, which has always tried to suppress it, but to the tradition, dating from the French Revolution, that free speech is a sacred thing.

In her artistic life France has always felt a powerful centralised tradition. The ideals of classic purity which were prevalent among the upper classes, shaped the drama of the Golden Age; the theorists, as always, coming afterward. Even when a new influence forced its way into the artistic life, such as the Romantic movement of the thirties, or the realistic movement of

the sixties, there was always some definite tendency in people's thoughts to date it back to.

In drama the tradition was the more effective because artistic life in France has always been so completely centralised in Paris. The theatres of Paris made the law for the provinces. Paris was the only place for an author to make his way into literature. To become established in France it was necessary to become established in Paris, to please a Parisian audience. And the Parisian audiences (apart, of course, from the horde of transient visitors) is a very homogeneous thing, constantly reflecting each new literary influence and each intellectual novelty as it becomes a fashion. It is, like all blasé societies, constantly in search of novelty, but it dislikes to be constantly dislodged and disconcerted. It agrees upon a certain way of doing things, upon a set of conventions on which it can meet together. It is typical of long established bodies that they resent a change in the form much more than a change in the matter. So the French audience likes to feel that its plays are written in a certain way, that when they are seeing a new thing they shall not be bothered with a new way of presenting it. Besides, like all homogeneous societies, it has its subjects in which it is chiefly interested. It is willing to see these topics treated again and again, if they reveal some novelty of nuance or feeling.

The form which Parisian audiences have accepted for their convention is that of Scribe and Sardou—the "well made play" with a certain spiritual coherence beneath its external action. The matter is of course, above all else, the "marital triangle,"—infidelity and extra-legal love. This is as much a staple of French drama as the sweet and innocent love-story is of Ameri-

can plays. French audiences never tire of seeing it, never fail to find something new in it.

Now French dramatists, being forced by their audiences to use the marital triangle again and again, find it necessary to give new turns and meanings to the situation. They cannot vary the obvious action, so they must invent a multitude of variations in subtler things —in the personality of their characters, in the broad significance of the plot, or in their literary style. They are assisted in this by their homogeneous audience, which is acquainted with all the plays that have gone before, is familiar with all the traditional twists and turns, and is prompt to catch the subtlest element of novelty whenever it appears. Consequently the French dramatists are leagues beyond all others in showing nuance of character, in manipulating details toward a precise effect, and in grooming literary style.

A foreigner, unacquainted with French drama, is sure to miss at a first reading the values which give the play its excellence to a Parisian audience. The things which the Parisian takes as a matter of course he is impressed with; the things which are new in the play he hasn't time to notice. The fact that the heroine, under certain circumstances, turns away from her lover and goes to a female confidante for advice, may illumine the whole character to the French audience; to the foreigner it is only one of the things any woman might do. Or again, the fact that husband and wife turn away from their respective lovers and fall into each other's arms, may to a French audience signify some triumphant refutation of a scientific fallacy about heredity; to a foreigner it would be merely what they ought to have done in the first place. Or, again, the mere turn of a phrase, which adds nothing in point of

Molière's "Le Festin de Pierre"—Act II. Design by Golovine
Imperial Alexandrovsky Theatre, St. Petersburg.

meaning, may to a French audience reveal a mastery of literary style on the part of the author, whereas to the foreigner it is only "French."

The foreigner, in short, can never fully appreciate French drama. The plays of Porto-Riche require for their comprehension a post-graduate course in the subtleties of French love-making—subtleties which can never be put in print. Brieux, in "The Escape," used the triangle to show two married people, supposed to be born with hereditary immoral tendencies, overcoming their heredity, or rather the myth of it, by sheer will-power, defiantly declaring themselves free and returning from their liaisons to each other's arms. The plays of Hervieu, which are dry reading to the foreigner, are praised to the heavens by French critics for their literary style, a style which does not at all consist in rhetorical language, but in subtleties of ordinary conversational French which are only evident to those who are familiar with every possible nuance of the language.

The number of subtle and grandiose significations which French dramatists can draw from their triangle is amazing. It is usually no more than the machinery by which the chief business of the play is effected. In Brieux's "The Escape," just mentioned, it is used to combat certain theories of heredity. In Porto-Riche's "Le Vieil Homme" it is used to show reflex influence on adolescent psychology. In Bataille's "Les Flambeaux" it is used to set in the relief the fascination of pure ideas to the scientific mind. In Hervieu's "Bagatelle" it is used to test out the nature and strength of friendship between men. In the same author's "L'Enigme" it serves as the basis for a virtuoso mystery play, an exercise in the weighing of circumstantial evidence. The values here mentioned are the essential ones in the

plays, the ones by which they are remembered, not incidental meanings read into the context.

The problem play, under the name of "piece à thèse," has long been known in France. It began its vogue in the sixties under Dumas *fils*, who quite frankly sought to use it as a means of influencing people's opinions, under the conviction that Paris was a radiating centre of thought, and the Parisian stage was or could be made the cerebral centre of public opinion. Perhaps his "Camille" was written primarily for the fun of making a play, and was only later discovered to be a sermon. But the fashion took hold, and ever since the problem element has been strong in French realistic drama, even in that part of it which is most addicted to amusement and "l'art pour l'art." The reform of the French marriage law, which, since the Restoration, had absolutely prohibited divorce, is commonly held to have been partly the result of the dramatic propaganda which showed how the absence of divorce fostered immorality. Certainly, the drama proved an effective means of bringing to consciousness the doubts that were in people's minds.

But the broadening of the scope of French drama and the modification of its aristocratic character, was largely due to the influence of Ibsen, introduced through Antoine and the Théâtre Libre. This institution, founded in 1890, contemporaneously with similar theatres in London and Berlin, was typical of the radical movements by which Paris is continually saving itself from becoming crystallised in its own tradition. Anything that is foreign is naturally suspect to the Frenchman, and no one but a man of great sincerity and ability could have attempted Antoine's task. The plays which he performed, both the foreign works of the Ibsen

tradition and the French plays written for the theatre by younger men, were sneered at in the terms with which we have become familiar as the vocabulary of the anti-Ibsen party. They were vulgar, immoral, unimaginative, disgusting, undramatic, unfit for presentation on the stage, and so on. The realistic acting he introduced was held to be without style and without beauty, imitation without inspiration. But the Théâtre Libre managed to hold its place and pay its way, serving as the storm centre of the new movement until its purposes became fairly a part of the cultural life of the capital. A number of since famous dramatists, among them Brieux, got their start from the Théâtre Libre, and the ability which Antoine showed in the conduct of it later procured him the directorship of the Odéon, where he had an artistically brilliant, though financially disastrous career of eight years. The Ibsen controversy died down, of course, and French drama became self-centred and narrowly national again, but the new generation of playwrights had learned their lesson, though it is difficult to trace the precise nature of the influence they received. It is interesting to note in passing that the next foreign invasion of French theatrical life—that of German scenery—brought its leader, Jacques Rouché, to the directorship of another national institution, the Opéra. By such strokes of boldness, in the face of public unpopularity, France has kept her traditions and institutions fresh and vigorous, when foreign prophets were always expecting them to disintegrate.

The rigid French dramatic tradition has kept the French dramatic output up to an extraordinary high level. Each aspirant to dramatic authorship must face an audience which knows all the established dramatists

and knows good workmanship from a multitude of masterful plays. It will tolerate naïveté of viewpoint, but it will not tolerate clumsiness or gauchérie. Each young author is thus obliged to keep the master craftsmen constantly in mind and study them to the utmost before he starts writing. He does not always follow the models, but he always shows that he is familiar with them. Accordingly the output, year after year, contains a quantity of plays of the first order, from the technical standpoint, which in a less productive age would shine as masterpieces.

The variation in the French dramatic output is much greater than would appear on the surface. To a foreigner the plays of Bernstein, Bataille, Hervieu and Porto-Riche seem much alike. Yet to a Frenchman the contrast between them is very great. To the superficial student they seem all to be concerned with the same subject-matter—marital infidelity, repeated endlessly with an insignificant variation in the details. But it is the tradition only that binds them together; in treatment, and especially in all that concerns style, they are very far apart. Bernstein is held to be the continuer of the Scribe tradition—the effort to get the greatest possible emotional excitement out of three or four acts. Bernstein is, next to Brieux, the best known French dramatist in foreign lands. In all that has to do with theatrical tricks of the trade—suspense, surprise, manipulation of the subplot, and the like—he is past master. The second act of "The Thief," which uses only two characters and works a long continued cross-examination into the most agonising emotional tension, has made him famous throughout Europe and America. Yet to the Parisians he is crude; his characters have no reality, being only pawns in his dramatic chess-play; he

Molière's "Le Festin de Pierre"—Act IV. Design by Golovine
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lacks taste and refinement. Above all, he lacks style. Without style (the esoteric meaning of the word must remain a mystery to the foreigner) no admission to the French gallery of immortals. His play "Après Moi," which occasioned an antisemitic riot when produced at the Comédie, was praised by certain critics as being written in "better French" than his previous works. They meant that the lines were better suited to the personalities of the characters using them and that more attention had been paid to the rhythm and polish of the phrase. In "Le Détour," one of his earliest plays, Bernstein shows a fine and delicate power of character delineation. It is an excellently observed piece, carried through by the logic of character to its tragic conclusion. But the power of the "big scene" overmastered the author, and after the brilliant success of "The Thief" he could no other. He perhaps had ambitions to range afield, treating the subject of "high finance" in "Samson," and antisemitism in "Israel"; and in the last act of the latter play (totally rewritten for performance in this country) he put some inspiring writing on the subject of the relation of Jew and Gentile. But always the subject-matter is made subservient to the manipulations of theatric excitement. In a recent play, "The Secret," however, he showed a more conscientious regard for character without losing his hold on theatricalism.

In Bataille we have a certain sort of virtuosity which is one of the most distinctive traits of the French genius, though this author has not managed to spread his reputation much beyond France. His mechanics are those of Bernstein, but his chief interest is in traits of character, which he deftly throws to the foreground and paints in eloquent colours, so that one has the sense

of having seen deep into the human heart. This trick of disengaging the personal trait from the action without abusing the office of the *raisonneur* and without making his characters mere personified traits, requires the highest kind of technical skill, in the finer sense of the term. In "La Femme Nue" he shows a character of natural simplicity and straightforwardness. "The Foolish Virgin," though a piece of crass theatricalism, is saved by its analysis of the emotional processes of the young girl taking a step beyond her powers of endurance, in running away with a married man whom she loves passionately. "Les Flambeaux" is Bataille's finest play. Here the character trait is the passion of the scientist for pure ideas, the "torches" of human progress. In all these plays marital infidelity is the groundwork of the plot. His manner is violent, his touch is uneven. But one feels something of the grandiose poet in his conceptions and is filled with something of his sincere enthusiasm for observing the mysterious workings of the human soul.

Of a very different sort are Donnay, Lémaître, and Curel, far less popular than the men just mentioned, but much more the correct thing in literary circles. Donnay, writing subtly and with keen intelligence, always has some intellectual interest to guide him. In "The Return from Jerusalem" he is studying the idealism of the Jewish people. In "The Duel" he pictures with fine penetration the struggle between science and religion. Lémaître's plays are of a more tenuous sort, masterful in presenting the subtle shades of a young girl's character, written with great simplicity and with the utmost refinement of language. Curel is the dramatist of the aristocrat, both in style and matter. In "The Fossils" he pictures the dying aristocracy of

France, its fierce clinging to tradition and class ideals, its pride in fine personality, and the futility, under modern conditions, of its desire to use its privileges in service. In "The Dance Before the Mirror" he seems to have brought dramatic subtlety to its last refinement, analysing vanity in its origin and growth, and its infinite reactions under love and jealousy. Paul Bourget is another dramatist of the upper class, at first something of a radical in his views, then an apologist for the *status quo*. His best known play, "The Barricade," deals with the "barricade" which exists between labour and capital, and which always must exist, the author maintains, because employers are able, responsible men, and workers are on the whole stupid men.

Hervieu's plays are, of all, perhaps the "most French." He has the sense of form and style as no other dramatist has it. Nothing slips through his fingers; every phrase, though realistic and true to probability, is a work of literary art. His virtuosity in form has served him in many a problem. His play "Chains" seemed to be a thesis drama to the effect that the woman who is denied a divorce from the man she cannot love will avenge herself by means of adultery. "The Torch Race" has for its thesis the theme that filial love is a weak, acquired virtue, that the love of parents for children is not returned but is passed on to the next generation. "Words Remain" is a logical *jeu d'esprit* in which we see a woman ruined by an imprudent speech of a man who afterward does all he can, but in vain, to redeem his hastiness. And "The Enigma," already mentioned, is a dazzling piece of theatric virtuosity, pure and simple. These works seem made of brain matter only; they are impenetrable to an emotional reader, though their statement is clear as crystal.

The author takes no part in the emotions he portrays. He is impersonal, imperturbable. Even when he seems in earnest about his theme, as in "Chains," it is the earnestness of a powerful proposition in logic. His characters are contemplated, not felt. His fable is the work of pure reason. And his style reflects these qualities. It seems to shine white and pure, without a tint and without a flaw.

All these writers deal freely in the marital triangle and the passions of the sexes. But it has been reserved for one man beyond all others to be known as the dramatist of love to the Parisians who know it as a fine art. This man is Georges Porto-Riche. His dialogue is of an introspective, sentimental sort, with a constant strain of morbidity—one would say, a muddy purple streaked with red. His subject-matter is ceaselessly love—love of the nerves, of the senses. He has the reputation of having "gone farther" than any other French dramatist. Much of his work demands an unprintable exegesis. His "L'Amoureuse" was meant to be a complete exposé of woman in the erotic state. His skill lies in constant suggestion, in the subtle interplay of situation, in the introspective analysis of character, and above all in the boiling undercurrent of his dialogue. His "Le Vieil Homme" is a masterpiece of a sort, the work of many years and of heroic labour, an analysis of the neurotic adolescent child which has few parallels in literature. The influence of Porto-Riche, if it dominated French drama, would make the Parisian theatre an unendurable hot-house of the emotions. Fortunately French literature is equally enthusiastic for pure ideas, for the ideality of philosophic contemplation.

The poetic dramatists of France will be mentioned

in another chapter. There remains another group whom we may know by the name of the thoughtful dramatists, of whom one, Brieux, has gained a world-wide reputation, and another, Octave Mirbeau, has made a unique position for himself by his handling of ideas. Mirbeau's peculiar standing comes from the fact that he is at once a master literary craftsman and an ardent partisan in social affairs. As a novelist he has a wide circulation among the literary fashionables. On the other hand the extreme Anarchists—an influential body in Paris—point to him as one of their own. His *métier* is that of novelist, but when he steps aside to write a play he invariably achieves something brilliant. "Business is Business" is a powerful and bitter satire on the modern Titan of Finance, a figure who is quite as impressive in France as in America, and the more outrageous to French taste because his self-made crudities appear against an old and superrefined culture. Isadore Lechat, hero, villain and comic relief in one, is a permanent figure in French drama. He appears on the scene like some beer-guzzling Napoleon, tremendous in will-power and vanity, tireless in the invention of devices for self-flattery, mediæval in tyrannical absoluteness, the terror of men and the laughter of the gods. The play is conceived in heroic proportions. The satirical touch is that of Molière, powerful, even heavy, but diabolically keen. The fable is built around the character. Lechat will have his own way; he insists upon purchasing an aristocratic husband for his daughter, and upon making his son the leader of Parisian society, paying for him fabulous gambling debts. Can there be anything that money won't buy? The daughter runs away with the gardener, the son is killed in an automobile smash-up one night when he is out on a

spree. Lechat, in a final scene that seems to have stepped out of an Elizabethan tragedy, is overwhelmed by the shattering of his plans, but overwhelmed especially by the mortal blow to his vanity. The play is not "well made." The plot is arbitrary; the catastrophe comes purely by chance. No "rigid logical development from the premises." Little loss! Lechat as an acting part, is one of the great achievements of the age. The play was tried in this country by William H. Crane, and failed. It demands an actor who is a great comedian and a great tragedian rolled into one. But though it has not given its author one-tenth the reputation of a Bernstein, it will remain as one of the great dramatic achievements of the present generation.

A more recent play of Mirbeau's, "The Hearth," caused a scandal in Paris. It was a satire on organised charity, but no ordinary good-humoured fun-poking. Its bitterness and thorough-going philosophy had a sting which made an enemy of any middle class person who saw it. It was accepted by the Comédie, chiefly on its author's reputation. Then there was a reconsideration, and nothing more was heard of it for a time. The author protested; he was advised to withdraw his manuscript. He brought suit. The direction of the Comédie insisted that the difficulty was a purely technical one of casting the parts. There was great talk of "influence from above." Finally the contract was sustained, and the play was put in rehearsal, the author consenting to withdraw the second act, in which the directors and patrons of the charitable institution for children visit their charges and display their characters. The bitterness of this act is beyond description. The play had its serious faults, but it is probably the enmity which Mirbeau made for himself which made

it seem not worth while to try further to fight out his ideas among the fashionable theatres of Paris.

The remainder of his dramatic output consists chiefly in several one-act pieces for the Grand Guignol, the "thriller" theatre of Paris. One of these, "The Purse," a delicious satire on the legal position of the Parisian pauper, has been acted at the Lake Forest Theatre in Chicago. Another, "Vieux Ménages," is a remarkable half-tender, half-bitter satire on the jealousy which arises in idle old age. In all these plays we feel an intellectual dynamic, a vigorous sense of artistic freedom, which is different from anything else in modern French drama.

The success of Eugene Brieux in foreign lands has been chiefly a *succés de scandale.* We have been so outraged, and later so astounded by the evangelistic zeal of the man that we have forgotten that he is also a dramatist—one of the greatest dramatists in all the history of French literature. Laurence Irving tried in vain to establish his dramatic reputation in America. "The Incubus" and "The Three Daughters of M. Dupont" passed over our unheeding heads. Through Bernard Shaw's edition of three of the most didactic plays Brieux became known as a "reading dramatist." Recently, when a medical society staged "Damaged Goods" purely as a sermon, Brieux's name became known to the whole country. Theatrical men were astonished to find the play a distinct financial success. It is easy to say that popular interest in it was only a morbid preoccupation with its subject—venereal disease. But the power of the play to hold its audience was beyond any mere morbid curiosity. Brieux was not writing didactic plays because he was a bungler at dramatic form. The first childish criticisms on his dra-

matic ability have given way to the finer sounding generalities about didacticism in art. "The theatre cannot properly be used for sermonising," say the theorists. To such a statement there can be only a short, impatient answer: The theatre can properly be used for anything authors and audiences want to use it for.

It was quite deliberately that Brieux became a sermoniser. He was deeply religious as a child, and had dreams of taking orders in the church until he read Herbert Spencer. He was always interested in the world about him, and considered the drama a means to an end. "If I had been born two centuries ago," he has said somewhere, "I should have been a nonconformist preacher." Theories about the "proper function of art" and the like trouble him not at all. He is trying in every way to use the institution and art of the theatre for the purpose of preaching sermons.

The first important fact about Brieux is that though he was born in Paris he was not born into the literary life. He was the son of a workman, poor and only moderately educated. His books were chiefly purchased with saved pennies, among second-hand stalls on the quays. His early reading was wide and ravenous. But being obliged to earn his living instead of courting the Muses with his pen he became a journalist in the provinces (though he had already written a youthful play or two). There he learned the telling brevity of phrase and the clear popular statement of ideas which has distinguished his plays. And his acquaintance with the provinces is of the highest importance. It is in drawing provincial types that he is at his best in his plays. He has seen the world through the eyes of a person very different from the blasé boulevardier who largely fills contemporary French drama. The sound-

ness of his moral tone must come partly from his provincial life in his formative years.

His earliest important play, "Blanchette," performed at the Théâtre Libre in 1892, is admirable in the way the catastrophe is shown to come from the subtle friction in family life between poor parents and a daughter educated beyond them. The play, which made its author's reputation, has been taken into the repertory of the Comédie Française and is acted there repeatedly. Of the twenty-nine or more plays which Brieux has already written, the most successful in France are "Blanchette," "The Red Robe," and "Les Remplaçantes." "The Red Robe" and "The Escape" have been crowned by the Académie. The former, with its powerful arraignment of a system of "justice" in which promotion depends upon success in obtaining convictions, provides some of the most thrilling scenes in modern dramatic literature. "La Foi," produced in England under the name "False Gods," is his only non-realistic play, a sort of tract for religion in its rôle of satisfying the disturbing doubts of men. Other plays of his vary considerably in their acting value, as in their interest, but zeal is never lacking. Sometimes there is a tendency to exaggerate, to overstate the case for or against, to use characters solely as awful examples. But the skill of the true dramatist is always at hand to save the situation by touches of humanity and passages of vigorous theatric action. When he is expounding a subject straight to the audience, as in the last act of "Damaged Goods," Brieux is admirable. The clear ordering mind, which can be simple without being superficial and zealous without being false, has here become the connecting link between a detailed Science, and an ignorant public.

The range of subjects which Brieux has treated with his clear journalistic mind is amazing. The disrupting power of education in "Blanchette"; the hypocrisy of politics in "M. de Reboval"; organised charity in "The Benefactors"; heredity of moral character in "The Escape"; the "marriage of convenience" in "The Three Daughters of M. Dupont"; gambling in "The Result of the Races"; the duties of motherhood in "The Cradle," and "La Déserteuse"; the hiring of wet nurses in "Les Remplaçantes"; venereal disease in "Damaged Goods"; the status of illegitimate motherhood in "Maternity"; woman's status in the economic struggle in "La Femme Seule"; and so on through a number of others. In these plays Brieux is usually not a radical, except in point of courage. He insists continually upon duties, especially duties toward society in the large. He is strongly opposed to any breaking-up of marriage where there are children who may suffer. He has a fine faith in the moral soundness of the provincial population. He is an apologist for religion. Especially he fights the vices and pleasures which are to be had at the expense of others. He is a man risen from the working class, with something of a middle-class insistence on the reasonable middle course. He has aptly been called the policeman of literature. No one who is acquainted with his work doubts either his moral sincerity or his dramatic ability.

In Italy the most striking dramatic phenomenon is the output of verse plays, which will be mentioned in another chapter. Among the realists two names stand out—Guiseppe Giacosa, whose recent death ended a brilliant and productive career, and Roberto Bracco, still young and ceaselessly prolific. Giacosa seems to be the Italian reflection of Ibsen. After a short tourney

with the law in his youth, he took to writing verse plays, imaginative and full of youthful vigour. Then the plays became historical and sober, sometimes full of mediæval gloom. His popularity became great, and when, in the late eighties he began to feel the influence of the realistic Ibsen, he was able, in "Tristi Amori," to carry his audience with him. The play is the familiar triangle set in the country, in a middle class family life. The one-act "Rights of the Soul," a superbly condensed psychological study, shows strongly the influence of Ibsen. In "As the Leaves Fall," a work admired beyond measure in Italy and Paris, he has a series of the most delicate character studies, drawn in simple lines of dialogue where more is meant than meets the ear. Perhaps his finest play, certainly the one that seems most important to an American reader, is "The Stronger," his last work. This is a study of the modern business man and the ethics of the crooked deal. The father has amassed his fortune chiefly for his son, whom he dearly loves. The son discovers in the father's past a certain amount of dishonesty, of the sort which the law cannot touch and is frequently enough practiced in business, but outside the moral code of the sensitive son. The young man leaves his father; he will not touch a cent. The final dialogue is masterly in its simple truthfulness and its fairness to both sides. The father reminds the virtuous boy that his fine ideals and unspotted life were made possible by the money which he scorns, but which continually shielded him from the evil and nurtured him in the good.

Bracco writes with a lightness and exquisite finish that reminds one of Goldoni. He is an artist to his finger-tips. His high comedy is of the finest stuff. At the same time he can show forth a tragic emotion

with tremendous power, and can construct a plot which carries his message exactly as he intends. And through it all one knows that the man is a thinker. He is the thinker who knows how to keep thoughts in their place, when to feel with people, when to laugh with them, when to laugh at them, and when to criticise them with logic. His sense of style is as exquisite as that of any one writing to-day. With his range of expression, his power of close observation, his spontaneous productivity, and his delicate feeling for his means, he is a theatrical man with an equipment hardly surpassed anywhere.

Whereas Butti, the other thesis-play writer of modern Italy, has been interested chiefly in the battle between science and religion, Bracco has shown a predominant interest in the status of woman in modern life, in such a way that we may fairly call him a feminist dramatist. He insists on full freedom in the marriage relation; only in this way, he says, is marital fidelity and happiness secure. "Infidele," played in this country some years ago by Nazimova under the French title of "Contesse Coquette," excellently illustrates his thesis. The piece is the lightest of comedies, almost a farce, except for the extreme delicacy of its treatment. The wife, goaded by her husband's suspicions, seeks herself out a gallant; having taught husband to respect her desires more, she tires of her gallant, allowing him to sneak most ingloriously from the room in which he had plotted a conquest. Again and again Bracco has repeated the neatness of this play in works which turn on a subtlety of psychology and are worked out with a perfect sense of style.

But Bracco can carry his theme into drama of the most serious sort. In "Don Pietro Caruso" we see the

roué agonised over the disgrace of his daughter—ruined by one of his own friends with whom he had often caroused. In "I Fantasmi" we have not the ghosts of Ibsen, but phantoms of an arier sort, the jealousies of a dead husband, which live on in the widow's life for years. In "Maternity" Bracco has given not the social view of the question, like Brieux, but the personal side. When Claudia learns that the only use her husband has for the child that is about to be born to them is to have it endowed by a fond relative with a large fortune, she revolts, telling the father that she is through with him—the child is hers. "I used to hear a voice," she cries, "calling to me loudly of the joy and the glory of being a mother! Now I carry in my womb the object of all my dreams, all my aspirations! I have triumphed! I have triumphed! I can now denounce your unworthiness! I can repel you as an intruder! I am sufficient unto myself! Oh, God, I thank thee! And now, I need nobody! Go!"

Such a voice out of Italy is sure to be heard again.

CHAPTER XI

THE LITERARY FORCES: THE RUSSIANS

WHEN, in 1825, the "Decembrist" plot to make Russia a republic was discovered and punished, native Russian literature was on the eve of its birth. Russia had long felt the influence of Western ideas, and even in the time of the Empress Catherine the name of Benjamin Franklin (apostle of republicanism to all Europe) was known and hated. For Franklin, to a large portion of the thinking aristocracy, was one of the great men of the time. The French Revolution slowly made its way in Russia, but the Napoleonic wars, which pressed so hard upon her national existence and called forth all the patriotic sentiments which could then be aroused, delayed the movement for internal reform. Republican sentiment came to a head in the Decembrist plot, organised among the leading officers of the army for the overthrow of the monarchy. This was the first of the long line of uprisings which have since distinguished Russian political and social life. It was followed, of course, by a policy of vigorous repression. And, as has always been the case, the repression of social ideas in outward life was followed by their expression in literature.

A few years after the Decembrist fiasco appeared Pushkin's narrative poem, "Eugene Onegin." This is commonly taken as marking the birth of Russian litera-

ture. Its connection with the Decembrist troubles is not obvious at the first glance, but a slight study reveals the underground meanings which thinking people drew from it. Pushkin himself was implicated in the Decembrist plot, and suffered several years' exile in the Caucasus because of it. In his later life in St. Petersburg he was suspect because of his radical opinions. It was as good as certain that his social beliefs would come out in his art work. The form and character of "Eugene Onegin" is Byronic, but the content is, for the first time in Slavic literature, truly Russian.

How can one's political opinions enter literature, and still escape the censor? By a simple translation of terms, the process being clear to all good radical spirits "on the inside." Before the Decembrist failure the proposition would have been: "We want a Republic." After it, the proposition became a question: "Why didn't we get it?" And this, for Pushkin's purpose, was translated into this question: "What is wrong with our Russian character (that made us fail to get our republic)?"—the clause in parentheses being that which was read between the lines. Pushkin's hero was offered as the typical "society man" of the time, without will-power, without purpose, without regard for the welfare of his fellow-beings. Therein, said Pushkin, was the trouble. And the poem, admired for its beauty by the thoughtless reader, was received by the elect as a political document.

The circumstance is worth recalling as a parable of all great Russian literature since. Each work of literary art which passed the censor and influenced Russia from that time on was a harmless analysis of character on the surface, and a political document under-

neath. Turgenieff's "Memoirs of a Sportsman," which prepared the abolition of serfdom, and is called "The Russian 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,'" contained not a word of politics, not a word of protest against social conditions. It was simply a series of character sketches drawn from the life of the serfs and their masters. But its political import was instantly recognised.

Each wave of reform and succeeding reaction in Russian social life has been paralleled by a similar wave in literature. Hopefulness is succeeded by pessimism. Pessimism generates a new and deeper analysis of Russian character, with the object of finding out "What's Wrong?" Pushkin was succeeded by Lermontoff, Lermontoff by Goncharoff, Goncharoff by Herzen, Herzen by Turgenieff, and so on, each contributing a deeper and deeper analysis of Russian character and the determinant social conditions, and each reflecting a more and more desperate radicalism of spirit. Turgenieff's "Fathers and Sons," which first gave currency to the word "Nihilist," corresponded to the anarchist wave of the seventies which resulted in the murder of Czar Alexander II.

Alongside of this creative literature there arose a critical and theoretical literature rarely equalled in vigour. A line of literary critics, writing in the Russian weeklies or monthlies, and exerting an influence which it is difficult for us to realise, interpreted each author as he appeared on the scene, pointing out what was distinctive in each and constructing from them a theory of criticism which for thoroughness has not been equalled in any Western nation. The theory which Dubroluboff and his co-workers impressed indelibly upon Russian readers was that which we know, for brevity, as the "art for life's sake" theory. Literature

SLEEP WALKING SCENE FROM "MACBETH"
DESIGN BY STROM AND GLIESE, TEMPELHOF, BERLIN
A perfect fusing of pictorial beauty and dramatic fitness

cannot exist for its own sake, they said; it has validity only when it exists to help or interpret men, and only then can it have any *artistic* existence. Along with this theory came an æsthetic of form which is essential to our understanding of Russian literature. This æsthetic said that form in itself is nothing; that form has no values apart from the work of which it is a part, and cannot in any degree be a lawgiver to a work of art. In other words, there is no such thing as *form;* there are only *forms,* and each form, for any mature art work, is unique. Take care of the sense, and the sound will take care of itself. Have something to say, and say it; if you have said it well your work will have a beautiful form.

The theory, it will be seen, was a direct outgrowth of the nature of Russian literature and this in turn was the direct outgrowth of the political and social aspirations of the people. As the struggle tightened and became more desperate, the literature deepened and became more intense. As education spread and the middle class and (to a limited degree) the peasants became fired with revolutionary ideas, the literature became more human and more democratic. If this close connection of Russian literature with life displeases you or seems inartistic, you can throw the whole business overboard as unworthy a cultivated man's attention. But if you are to understand Russian literature at all you must understand it as an expression of the aspirations of men and women's lives. The connection is forever veiling itself, to escape the notice of the censor or to pierce to the essential beneath the superficial. Once you have understood it in one set of terms it is presently talking in another. Like Proteus, it becomes a fish when you are prepared to attack

an old man, and a snake when you are prepared to catch a fish. But underneath all its disguises it remains one and the same thing, with a single soul and a single intention—our old friend, the Revolutionary Spirit.

The beginning of Russian drama dates from almost the same year as the Russian novel. In the eighteenth century, when English literature was the fashion in Russia, excellent comedies were written in the style of Sheridan, the Empress Catherine herself doing a few of some merit. The characters were usually taken from the Russian upper classes, which, being busy imitating the manners of London or Paris, offered little truly Russian material to the playwrights. However, one or two of the motives of later Russian drama, such as the venality of the bureaucracy or the obsession of foreign fashions, crept into the plays of the time and gave them a native tinge. The venality of the bureaucracy and its underlings was the whole theme of Gogol's "Revizor," the first great native Russian play, which was suspect and about to be banned by the authorities until the Czar saw it one night and laughed so hard that suppression became impossible. Gogol's material was thoroughly Russian, and from that time on native drama continued to be in good standing with audiences, if not with the political powers.

In the fifties and sixties, when Russia was seething with liberal sentiment and the liberation of the serfs was the topic uppermost in people's minds, Ostrovsky wrote his folk-tragedies. Ostrovsky was a real genius, one who, if he had written when Russia was less cut off from the rest of Europe, would have had a world-wide reputation. The peasantry was then just beginning to have a place in Russian literature. Ostrovsky

performed for Russia much the office that Hauptman has more recently performed for Germany—demonstrating to people that poor folk had souls. He knew his types, and presented them with faithful realism, though of course with the technical conventionalities which were then in vogue. But his realism was more than photography. For he refused to give his plays an ending, just as the plots of real life always carry on into new ones. The endings of his last acts always show a vista of the story that continues beyond. The peasant heroine of "The Storm," after her faithlessness has been discovered and her lover drowned, sees the long, bitter life ahead of her, slavery and social disgrace. So Ostrovsky raises his action from an isolated event into a vision of life itself, as though to say: "I am showing you here not men but Man."

This tradition has been directly continued in the more modern Russian plays with which this chapter will chiefly deal. But while this realistic drama was developing, parallel with the novel, there was flourishing a poetical and historical drama of great power and beauty. This, too, took its origin from Pushkin, whose "Boris Godounoff," though not especially adapted to the stage, is a classic of Russian poetic drama. The chief continuers of this tradition, in the latter half of the century, were Alexander Tolstoy and Merezhkowski. The former drew his subjects from the barbarous and picturesque histories of the Russian kings, developing his plots with considerable historical fidelity and a wealth of local allusion. His plays have somewhat the place in Russian literature that those of Schiller have in German, though they are much more genuine in feeling and language. The Russian operas which have been seen in London and New York—"Boris Godou-

noff," "Khovantschina," and "Pskovitienka"—give a good idea of the spirit of these plays. They are a series of historical pictures, as free in point of plot tracing and act structure as the chronicle plays of Shakespeare, always willing to step aside to give a picture of the time, always anxious to obtain the greatest amount of colour and emotional vigour from the historical subject-matter. "The Death of Ivan the Terrible" shows us the vehement senility of the man who by the brandishing of terror established the Kingdom of Moscow as the nucleus of modern Russia. We see his intrigues and assist at his overtures of marriage to Queen Elizabeth of England. We see the boyars sitting in council, attempting to manipulate the weakening will of the monarch each for his own benefit. We see the crafty Godounoff, Tartar upstart and adventurer, gaining Ivan's condence and lording it over the councillors. We see Ivan's wife, bullied but intermittently defiant, awaiting with anxiety the answer of her prospective successor, Queen Elizabeth. And then Ivan at the point of death, resentful against the fate of which he fancied himself the master.

The plays of Alexander Tolstoy have been a staple of the great Russian theatres. When the experimenters in modern scenery were ready to apply their knowledge, these plays were at hand to meet them in imagination. They did not have to be revived or "rediscovered," but were in the standard repertory. Thus blank verse drama has flourished in Russia, along with the most thorough-going realistic plays, as a natural part of theatrical art, and not, as in most Western countries, as a sort of incense burnt to the Muses. Exuberance in poetic drama has always been a sign of artistic youth in a nation, and these plays have something of the

Design for Maeterlinck's "L'Intruse." By Livingston Platt
Produced by Dartmouth Dramatic Club

youthfulness of direct attack which we feel in Marlowe's dramas.

When we come to consider the plays of Count Leo Tolstoy we must leave a wide berth for our prejudices. Tolstoy has paid the penalty for being too much in earnest. His novels previous to his "conversion" in 1879 are admired everywhere: greater ones cannot be found in any literature in the world. But the Tolstoy of the later period is suspected—hated almost—by the world at large. His appeal to conscience is so terrible and direct that we try to escape by calling the man insane, a religious mystic, or (that final condemnation of the middle class mind) impractical. "The Kreutzer Sonata" has probably been as deeply hated as any book of the last half century. And because it is "impractical" (exactly as primitive Christianity was impractical and as all thorough-going religions are impractical) we feel justified in leaving it out of serious consideration. For many, this is merely a cheap and easy way of avoiding the man's moral challenge. It is so easy to point out the childlike qualities in this later Tolstoy, the places where he stops thinking and depends on faith. It requires manliness to stand up and face him, and then accept or reject. And because it is easier to sneer and despise we call him a fool and have done with it. And we are supported in our sneers by many a "principle of art," to the effect that no work that preaches can be a real work of art. Now it is evident that the only interest Tolstoy had, in his later years, was in preaching; he had not the least intention of creating works of art. And so the whole matter seems simply solved, with the help of Tolstoy himself. Everything he wrote after 1879 we simply regard as the work of a crazy man,

exactly as we regard all the compositions of Schumann's last five or six years as the product of his insanity.

Tolstoy's four plays, being all the work of this last period, easily fall into the classification. And any one nurtured in the prevailing science of the drama is inclined to toss them aside with a smile of pity for the author's childishness. They are so naïve in their manner of writing, so utterly innocent of the precious "understanding of stage effects" which we have painfully collected these many years, that they seem to some the work of incompetent ignorance. Tolstoy despised the theatre of his time, which he felt was nothing but a pandering to sensuality. He had no interest in it unless it could serve him as a pulpit. It is evident that he wasted no single minute studying its esoteric lore. So it seems obvious to many that his plays are nothing but long-winded incompetence.

But it is the part of wisdom to hesitate before so grandly pronouncing judgment on a great man. Since it is evident that Tolstoy was not concerned with what fashionable dramatists are interested in, it behooves us to ask what it was that he was driving at. Without such an attitude of mind we shall be as incapable of appreciating his plays as Newton was of appreciating "Paradise Lost," when he asked, "What does it all prove?" It is senseless to judge him by accepted standards, for the reason that he rejected them utterly before he began to write. The only honest attitude is to listen to his plays, free to be interested or bored, as the event decides, and then render account whether we have felt something of what the writer felt was so terribly important to human souls. Personally we may or may not be interested in these moral problems of

Tolstoy's. But thousands of people have been, in the theatres of Europe; and in the face of this plain fact it is arrant foolishness to say that Tolstoy didn't know what he was about.

Tolstoy's method, in plain words was: When you have something to say, say it. The recipe is at once so simple and so profound that no one can quite believe that he meant it. But it explains all his later writing, and explains, for our purpose, his dramatic technique. He had to show a certain character doing certain things. His method was exactly the method of children giving a "show" in the back yard: First show what they did first, then show what they did next—and so on. No feeling about for "act unity," for "conservation of emotional effect," and the like. He is far too deeply concerned with his moral message to be obliged to hunt up any formal unity; there are far too many emotions wasting away human souls in the world, for him to be obliged to "conserve" them as they come, as the studious littérateurs do when they write by rule. There are as many scenes as the author needs, each as long or as short as the content justifies; as many characters as are needed to tell the story, each doing what he may or can, according to his lights. No concern for balance or proportion, or "stageworthiness." Only many very human people doing painfully human things, and all bound together by the fierce moral energy of their author. In short, Tolstoy's dramatic technique is all contained in the King's edict in "Alice in Wonderland": "Begin at the beginning, go on until you get to the end, and then stop."

The pair of plays, "The Power of Darkness" and "The Fruits of Enlightenment" dating from the late eighties, became rather well known in the course of the

"free stage" movement of the next few years, and have particularly become known to readers of Tolstoy's collected works. The former, if it impresses you at all, impresses you as one of the most terrible tragedies ever written. In the peasant household which Tolstoy shows us lust has full sweep, and evil desire leads to crime after crime, until the whole group, saving only the old father, are involved in the most base and horrible crimes. The murder of Okulina's illegitimate child is described in detail by one of the characters who is observing it, while the act is being perpetrated in the cellar of the hut. Not a detail is spared that might make us feel the power of darkness. The spectator feels personally weighed down by this load of crime, even as Nikita, the centre of them all, who finally shouts them out to an assembly of merry-makers, and appeals to God above for mercy. Except for the stark human power of Tolstoy's treatment this play would appear an absurd extravagance. But we know from a glance at the daily papers that its events are not unusual but most ordinary. And we know, as we come to the inevitable accounting with ourselves, that some elements of the evil which produced this mass of crime is in our own hearts.

"The Fruits of Enlightenment" is perhaps the single comic effort of a man who is popularly supposed to be absolutely without a sense of humour. But it is bitter humour, with something of the bitterness of a starving man watching a grand opera. Swesdinseff, in his declining years of idleness, is much taken up with spiritualism, while his wife is equally concerned with microbes and the most approved discoveries of medical science. The one is the dupe of mediums, the other of doctors. These fruits of enlightenment are set over

against the simplicity of soul of three peasants who come to conclude a business deal with the old man. The latter is stingy and suspicious. His daughter, in council with some of the servants, plans to procure for him the advice of an expert "medium,"—namely, his kitchen boy. Swesdinseff signs the contract with the peasants. The plot comes to light, but his daughter Betsy presents her case (and Tolstoy's) in such a convincing manner that all are forgiven, and the master of the house learns something of true enlightenment—namely, simplicity of mind. The play is full of spirit and vigorous character drawing.

The other two of Tolstoy's plays—"The Living Corpse," and "And the Light Shines in the Darkness" —are posthumous works found among his papers after his death. Both have been acted through the length and breadth of Germany, the former having been the great success of the season 1912-13 at Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater in Berlin. Both are even looser in structure than the earlier plays. "The Living Corpse" is perhaps the weakest of the four, but it is a story of absorbing interest. In pure picturesqueness of romantic imagination Tolstoy has here surpassed the fashionable poetic dramatists on their own ground. But romantic imagination, of course, was not what Tolstoy was driving at. He tried to show a man who had made a mess of his life, attempting to undo the evil as best he could—and the stupidity of human law bringing everything back to its evil estate. Feodor Protassoff, weak and vicious, realises the tragedy he has been bringing into his wife's life, and resolves to free her to marry the man she really loves. He writes her a letter telling her he is about to commit suicide and wishes her happiness. He raises the revolver to

his temple. Then human weakness steps in. Why not merely disappear? Lisa will believe him dead and he will find some happiness and perhaps some good in his remaining years. So he runs away with a gypsy girl who is in love with him, and Lisa sensibly marries her lover. But one night in an inn a stranger recognizes Protassoff, and starts a scheme of blackmail. Protassoff has no money. The matter is reported. Protassoff is arrested. He expresses his (and Tolstoy's) hatred and contempt of the law and the courts before a judicial examiner. Lisa is tried on a charge of bigamy. Protassoff sees the misery he has caused and shoots himself. The scenes, as they follow one another, are fascinating, now a conversation at afternoon tea, now a revel in a low wine-room. There is many a dramatic moment, recalling Tolstoy's earlier love of pure story-telling. But through it all rings the author's moral fervour. The title is more than a mere name to the story. It refers to the man whose soul has already received the wages of sin.

"And the Light Shines in the Darkness" is one of the most remarkable autobiographic documents in the world's literature. The reading public of all countries was thrilled a few years ago by the story of Tolstoy's death, how he left his home and family because he believed that there he was living contrary to the commands of the Scriptures, and wandered forth to get free of compromising ties, that he might be perfect, even as his Father in Heaven is perfect. He died of exhaustion in the railway station of a tiny Russian village. He was supposed to have been insane, but thoughtful people knew that the word had been hurled at plenty of great men before him and proved nothing. What had passed in his mind,

through these latter years, that made him desert his wife and family, whom he dearly loved, to become a worthless tramp? The answer was found among his papers in the unfinished play, "And the Light Shines in the Darkness." It was a personal and dramatic version of his great essays on religion. It revealed the soul of a man who dared to take the Gospels seriously. It had evidently been worked at, from time to time, for years, and was in all probability a nearly exact transcript of what had been done and said in his own house. The play was Tolstoy himself, going through the most intense struggles of conscience. The last act alone was missing, being sketched in merely with a few lines of a scenario. This last act Tolstoy supplied in the flesh, in his wandering and final death.

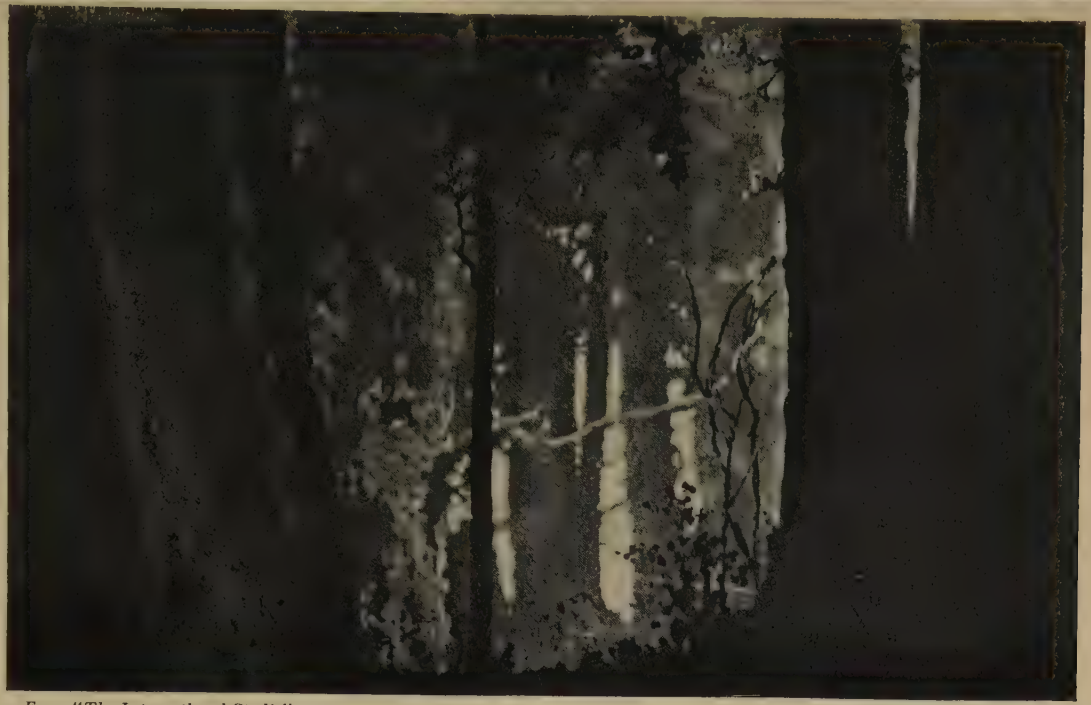
The last act will probably never be written. It need not be. The tragedy stands without it. It is the tragedy of the man who tries to be consistently religious—to be true to his God and to his neighbour at the same time. Nikolai Ivanovitch has taken the commands of Jesus literally. Basing himself on the Gospels and rejecting the authority of the Church, he wishes to give away his property, which he says was stolen from the peasants. It is wrong, he says, to live in comfort while our brothers are starving. His wife will not permit him to disinherit his children and leave them and her in poverty. He decides he ought not try to force his convictions on others. He will merely act for himself—leave his house and get free of this entangled luxury. Desertion of wife and family! Then, he says he will merely keep a single room for himself, and will earn his living by manual labour, like the peasants. But his aged hand bungles the carpentry he undertakes. A young priest has been won

over by his talk from the Church to his primitive Christianity, and Boris, son of a Princess, who is a guest in the house, follows him heart and soul. The latter refuses to do military service and is imprisoned. Nikolai's daughter, Boris's fiancée, begins to hate her father. The family continues to lead the life that is in his eyes frivolous and criminal. They consider him heartless and unnatural. His attempts to follow the teachings of Jesus only bring unhappiness on others. "Ought I to become a wanderer?" he cries in his agony. "Is it a sin to believe in Thee, O Father? No, no—Help me, O my God!"

Here the written play closes. Tolstoy's scenario relates that in the last act the Princess, having unsuccessfully made intervention to the Czar on behalf of her son, breaks into Nikolai's room and stabs him.

Of this play it is almost impossible to speak. No praise can add to its greatness, no sneer can detract. The simplicity of its dialogue, the loving justice with which Tolstoy draws all his characters (excepting only the bishop of the Church, whom he hates), the human genuineness of its motives, can be equalled only by the greatest works in the world's literature. It is possible, as we have said, to reject this play altogether. But if one has an ear for these characters in their mortal struggle with Conscience, one must admit that artistic canons are insignificant beside it and recognise in it one of the supreme works of the modern stage.

Tolstoy's plays are lawless, but they always contain some elements of obvious dramatic conflict. Tchekoff's plays, on the other hand, are almost completely "static." The old formula for drama said that character must be shown by means of action. Tchekoff's



From "The International Studio"

FOREST SCENE FOR "CHANTECLER." DESIGN BY MONROE HEWLETT

A sense of depth produced by a skillful use of gauze.

plays are written for the sake of character. For whole acts there may be no sign of plot-action. Action occurs only when the author needs it for the purpose of producing a change in character. These plays throw us off the scent at first reading or seeing. They have no movement, they seem not to be "getting anywhere." We have to discover for ourselves that all this dialogue is justified in the author's mind if it reveals to us his characters. Why shouldn't character-revealing talk be interesting? And if it is interesting why isn't it good drama? We must get something of Tchekoff's enthusiasm for pure character study before we can appreciate his tender and delicate plays.

Tchekoff, coming from a humble family of Little Russia, gained his fame as a short story writer for the magazines. His character sketches were vivid in the extreme and his sense of comedy as lively as that of any Russian author since Gogol. He took to writing plays in the natural course of events—and in his own style. "Uncle Vanya" was dashed off in a few weeks as a sort of answer to a popular play advancing an analysis of Russian character with which he disagreed. At first his plays were unpopular. But when the Art Theatre of Moscow took them up, mounting and acting them with superb understanding of their subtle charm, he rapidly became one of the best known playwrights in Russia. He did quite as much for the Art Theatre as it had done for him, for his plays became immensely popular, and the theatre adopted as its symbol a seagull, in recognition of his best drama.

To appreciate Tchekoff's plays you must be content to sit back in your seat with a soul at rest, willing to let things happen when they will or never, glad to come gradually to know a few people's whose finely

strung spirits react sensitively to the world about them. It is the mood in which one sits for hours before a wood fire, learning to know a friend from remarks dropped at long intervals in the silence. Tchekoff rarely has passages of strong emotion, never of the emotion that moves things. When his characters feel, they show it only by a twitch of the mouth. They do not rush from emotion into action; they suffer and stay silent.

The acting needed for these plays is of quite a special kind. It must be of great simplicity, without tricks and without set traditions. But it must be highly selective of significant details. Repressed passion, as our emotional actresses show it, is not for Tchekoff. "Do nothing unless there is some special reason" is Tchekoff's lesson to the actor, and a lesson which it is hard for our theatrical generation to learn.

"The Seagull" is made of gossamer, and one misses it at first seeing. It demands an audience always on the alert, yet always in repose. The character of the young poet, whose soul is being seared among the selfish and callous people about him, is shown in a multitude of the most delicate touches. "Uncle Vanya" is much the same tale, this time an old man and a young girl, who find in each other the sympathy which has failed them in all their associates. In "The Cherry Orchard" the orchard, always seen at the back of the stage, serves as a symbol of Russia. Here is a chance for stylisation in the setting. Tchekoff's plays are full of such chances, but they must not be abused. None but a delicate artistic sympathy should attempt to stylise these plays.

One should not leave Tchekoff without mentioning his two delightful one-act farces, "The Bear" and "A

Proposal of Marriage." These are filled with the most engaging fun, which up to the last line never dulls for a minute. In them one feels the comic genius of "The Revizor" alive again.

Maxim Gorky, who is chiefly known by his wonderful tramp stories, is like Tchekoff, in that his plays too are "static," but like him in hardly another particular. "A Night's Lodging," generally known by its German title "Nachtasyl," made for him a reputation as a dramatist which he has since not been able to sustain. "Nachtasyl" is a wonderful collection of characters, gathered together in a cheap lodging-house, exchanging observations, swapping philosophies, and prying into one another's characters. Little happens in the course of the play, except when the old actor gets drunk or the police enter to suppress a fist fight. There seems to be nothing to hold the play together, and yet, as one reads it over, one feels resentful that any single line should be cut.

Gorky's later plays lack the wonderful picturesqueness of character which made "Nachtasyl" famous. Their chief virtue is their faith in the ability of ideas to interest an audience, but as the characters in "Children of the Sun" continue a conversation through many acts to no apparent purpose, or the arbitrary events of "Middle-Class Lives" fail to dispel the monotony which overhangs the play, we feel that we prefer Gorky in story form. The failure of these plays, however, is not the failure of the "static drama," which is successful just as often as it can present interesting material to an interested audience. It is merely the failure of a popular author without enough to say.

The end of the era dominated by Maxim Gorky which closed with the practical failure of the Revolution of 1905, left Russia in one of its periodic moods of pes-

simism. These moods of alternate hope and despair, resulting from the political atmosphere, are strangely intense in the Russian character, and strangely widespread over the nation. With an accuracy for which there is no parallel in any other country, they are promptly reflected in the current literature. But as always in Russian literature, pessimism does not mean utter loss of faith and interest, but an acknowledgment of outward defeat and a new stock-taking of spiritual facts. In this new phase Andreieff has become the dominant literary figure. In his novels and sketches, notably "The Seven Who Were Hanged," he had shown himself master of the realistic manner that has become traditional in Russian prose. But a spiritual stock-taking demands something besides realism. Andreieff supplied it in a metaphysic which is dynamic, and a mysticism which is humanitarian.

To the eternal Russian question, recurring to each generation: "What shall we do about it?" Andreieff replies: "We will continue to strive and suffer. Our effort may be counteracted, but in the truest sense it cannot be lost." In "Anathema" he pictures a poor Jewish merchant, consumed with a desire to help his fellow-men. He receives word that he has been left an immense amount of money by a deceased brother in America. He decides to spend it in feeding the poor. The word is spread about and the poor come from all directions. But the more he gives the more there are to receive. Suffering is boundless; his large fortune is limited. When his resources are nearly at an end the crowd of alms-beggars is larger than ever. Finally, when he has no more to give, their worship turns to resentment, then to enmity, then to a mob hatred which kills him and his family. Andreieff has enframed this

HE MERCHANT OF VENICE"—ACT I, SCENE II. DESIGN BY ROBERT E. JONES

"In this scene," says the artist, "you see the sky—and little else."

play with a prologue and epilogue at the gates of Heaven. Anathema, the Spirit who Denies, has bartered with the Keeper of the Gates for the soul of the Jew. To Anathema good is non-existent; his laugh can destroy all that seems real; the world is only a nightmare. Has he not proved it? Has not the brotherly love of the Jew led only to hatred and death? But the Keeper of the Gates denies that the love of the Jew has come to naught. The results cannot be measured; nothing that can be measured is of much value; the spirit which can apprehend only what can be measured is a spirit of death. He, the Keeper of the Gates, stands for eternal Assertion, which cannot die, and which has won the wager with Anathema, the Spirit who Denies, "ever alive in weights and measures, but yet unborn to life. . . ." Mysticism this, but one based on a solid human fact, the love of the poor Jew for his fellow-men

"The Life of Man," perhaps the only one of Andreieff's plays which can be set down as flatly pessimistic, has a special interest in this book as probably the only play hitherto written by a great writer which has been planned, from inception on, for stylisation. We have seen, in the chapter on Stylisation, the difficulties attendant upon stylising plays not meant for it. Here, is a play that was meant for it, and the Moscow Art Theatre has achieved remarkable results in setting it. The play sets forth the life of Man, in five "pictures": "Birth of the Man and pain of the mother; Love and poverty; Wealth, a ball at the house of the Man; the Man in unhappiness; Death of the Man." In and out of the action stalks a mysterious figure, "Somebody in Gray," who holds a candle which burns to its end as the Man's death draws nigh. The scenes all commence and

end in darkness. This or that significant detail comes first into view. Throughout, the endeavour is to emphasise the typical and symbolic. The author's care in the work of stylisation has extended to all sorts of practical details, as when he directs for the final scene in the wine-room, that "the number of men appears greater because of their shadows, which flicker about on the walls and ceiling."

In "Ignis Sanat," again, human endeavour seems to come to nothing, but the author's conviction that evil is based on untruth brings its ray of hope. Sawa, a young anarchist, plots to destroy a certain holy picture, in a cloister near his home, in order to destroy the superstition which its reputation for miracle-working has fostered. His sister Lipa is convinced that religion, whether true or not, is good because of the happiness and beauty it brings into men's lives. The monks of the cloister are quite corrupt, and one of them, in consideration of a little money, agrees to light the explosive on the midnight of the day before the annual festival of the picture. The sister gets wind of the plot and spoils it. But the monks have got an idea. They will stage their explosion, with the picture taken away, and then immediately return the picture and make capital out of its miraculous preservation. And the bitterest fact is not that the crowd of worshippers, the next day, on being told of Sawa's intention, crush him to death in their fury, but that they, and even the monks who engineered the game, believed that the miracle had actually taken place as their story averred. The play is admirable in plot and in the lively characterisation of the brother and sister and of the debauched but good natured monks.

Andreieff's plays are inclined to the static structure

of Gorky's. But they have, in addition, the most powerfully emotional prose that is being written in modern drama. No literary tendency can be more admirably modern than that which seeks to leave to past centuries rhymed verse, and to cultivate the far finer feeling for noble rhythmic prose. As an example of this, as well as of the humanitarian mysticism referred to, "To the Stars" is Andreieff's most distinctive play. It contains not an iota of action, except for the doings off-stage of a character who does not appear. Just across the Russian border a number of revolutionists are gathered together at the home of one Sergei Ternowski, an astronomer who has made it his work to study Life in its largest aspect. His son Nikolai, has led a revolutionary uprising in the streets of a Russian city, has been wounded, captured, and thrown into prison. The whole of the play, admirable in its characterization, consists of the opinions of the characters as to the fate of Nikolai and the philosophic questions it involves. One of Ternowski's assistants is disgusted by the revolutionists' discussion and returns to work. Another, a Jew, is moved by it to the resolution to go out and fight for men in the world of action. "I want no more to do with science!" he cries. "I am going away from here. I am going with you. I hear how they are crying out there. The stars do not hear it—but I hear it. . . . Yes, I am a Jew and I call upon the God of the Jews: Lord God, to whom vengeance belongs, Lord God, to whom vengeance belongs, appear! Arise, thou Judge of the World, and give to those who have faith that which they have earned! Lord God, to whom vengeance belongs, Lord God, to whom vengeance belongs, appear!"

And finally comes Marushja, Nikolai's fiancée, with the news that her lover has lost his reason in the tor-

tures of prison and will be an idiot for the rest of his life. Marushja is ready to quit her life or to spend it in a romantic sacrifice at the side of her lover. Hopelessness hangs over all. Then Ternowski, who has studied Life and knows that all that is good flows from it, speaks:

"There is no death. Nikolai lives in you, and in Petya, and in me—in all who remain true to the beauty of his spirit. Do you suppose that Giordano Bruno is dead? Only the animals, which have no countenance, die. Only he who kills dies; he who is killed, burned, torn in pieces—he lives to eternity. There is no death for men, there is no death for the son of eternity!

"In the temples of antiquity there was an eternal fire kept. The wood became ashes, the oil was burned up—but the fire was kept alive eternally. Do you not feel it—here and everywhere? Do you not feel in yourself his pure flame? Who gave you this gentle spirit, whose thought, escaped from the mortal body, lives on in you? Dare you say that your thought is *yours?* Your soul is only an altar on which the Son of Eternity lights his sacrificial fire! (Raising his arms to the stars.) I greet you, my unknown, my distant friend!"

And Marushja says simply: "I will go back into Life."

"Go," replies Ternowski. "Give back to Life what you have received from it! Give the sun its warmth back again! You will perish, as Nikolai has perished, as all have perished whose part it is to nourish the eternal fire with their fair spirits. But through your destruction you will achieve immortality. Upward to the stars!"

CHAPTER XII

THE LITERARY FORCES: DRAMATISTS OF THE GERMANIC NATIONS

IN grouping together Scandinavia, Germany, Austria, England and America for one chapter we find little beyond the supposed Germanic ancestry of the countries to justify the arbitrary connection. They have had quite different histories and traditions. One general fact alone can be predicated of them: they are learning to know each other. Not a little of this understanding is due to a mutual appreciation of their arts. Modern facilities for printing and translation, for the spreading of daily news and classified information, has put the best part of the art and culture of each nation at the disposal of every other nation, the only practical limitation being the stupidity or narrow-mindedness of the recipient. And in the matter of the drama, of course, this internationalisation has been particularly striking. It is now about a quarter of a century since the first English performances of Ibsen's plays shocked and pained London. Rereading reviews of the time makes one realise what a distressing experience it was for the Englishmen to get somebody else's point of view. We need not lay this to English stupidity; every nation has at some time repeated the performance, and most of them do it continually. For that first mysterious puzzling out of another viewpoint is a mental and moral struggle. When it has been achieved, life is never

again quite the same. So painful are the successive steps in the brotherhood of man.

Thanks in great part to Ibsen this process has been going on steadily in Europe and America in the last twenty or thirty years. There are few more impressive spectacles in the history of literature than the conquering of the European theatre by this grim thinker, writing from a small and remote nation, doing something he wanted to do and nobody else in the world wanted him to do, and finally making everybody else want to do it too. The reawakening of the European theatre is of course due to more than one cause, but as a matter of overwhelming convenience we lay the whole matter to Ibsen and let it go at that. In whatever nation the appreciation of Ibsen penetrated, there arose a new era in drama. Audiences saw a world of new possibilities in the stage, and native authors felt the necessity of doing things that had never been done in the land before. So each nation, while adopting a dramatic convention much like that of every other, developed a personal form of expression more peculiar to itself than it had had before. And with the growing interest the interchange between countries became more abundant. And as a result, the reader of a few well selected foreign plays (in translation, if necessary) can, without going abroad, learn to know viewpoints to understand which he would formerly have had to live in the foreign land.

Scandinavia could hardly have been expected to furnish the world a second Ibsen, but it did the next best thing—produced one of the most intense geniuses of the time who did some of his most effective work in the dramatic form. Strindberg's plays, still scarcely known in England or America, are permanent fare in Germany, where they are admired, and, what is more important,

understood at their true value. This understanding can hardly come by direct inspiration; it grows in direct proportion to one's familiarity with the plays. Strindberg, undoubtedly a genius of great power, ploughed his own furrow, establishing not only a new dramatic type, but a new domain of literary expression. The peculiar form of his play flows from the peculiar nature of his subject-matter. He is writing always the thoughts of a very intense mind; he is assuming characters who have rare powers of self-analysis; he is interested not in presenting people as they seem, but in analysing them to the utmost. His dramatic method, though at bottom realistic, inevitably becomes one of unusual condensation, sometimes verging into symbolism. He makes his dialogue carry such a quantity of thought that it seems at times as though the whole structure would break down. Sometimes he crowds such an amount of psychological analysis (in the strict sense) into a single short scene that we seem, in retrospect, to have lived through several months of a soul's experience. Often the rapid succession of essential moods is beyond what could possibly be found in real life, and there is a resulting sense of unreality, as in the one-act "Countess Julie." Violence of this and another sort has prejudiced more than one reader and spectator against Strindberg's plays. We need a bit more charity. This psychological condensation, this overweighting of the dialogue with introspective thought, is only a dramatic convention, the particular artificiality which Strindberg has invented to carry his particular sort of play. Once accept the plays as they stand and you have a wonderful group of intellectual experiences open to you. One need not agree with his view of woman as a snake-eyed adventuress in order to sympathize with the writer, his

intense sympathy for every sort of human feeling, his intense longing to achieve the finest sort of power that was in him, his intense struggle with the vices, some of them the most base and petty, with which he was beset.

His historical verse plays never achieved much success outside Sweden and have rarely been translated into foreign languages. His list of realistic plays seems endless. The first to be put into English was "The Father," purporting to show how utterly the husband's peace of mind is in the wife's gentle care. We have since had an opportunity to read many another analysis of marriage from his pen. "The Link" is a breathless tale of mutual accusations and recriminations in a divorce court, and in the mass of jealousies arising out of perverted sexual passion the child is left adrift. "Comrades" is a bitter tale of man and wife who sought to "work together;" they were rivals, says Strindberg, and there could be no marriage. "Creditors" shows a wife triumphantly using her power of outplaying and exhausting one man after another.

Again and again the woman is an evil genius. In "Countess Julie" she is a sensual maniac, giving herself to her coachman, and then tearing her soul to pieces with doubts and fears. In "Motherlove" she is a mother jealous for domination in her child's every act. In "The Dance of Death" she is a plotter, with two faces as always. In a host of one-act plays Strindberg repeatedly shows his uncanny power of analysis. His intellectual dynamic never seems to fail. His clearness of mental grasp, apart from an occasional symbolism of method, holds the attention spellbound.

But he is more than the mysogynist and pessimist. He is sometimes the moralist and even the tender poet. In the play translated as "There Are Crimes and

Crimes" he has a powerful study of the growth of moral responsibility, apart from overt acts, in the human conscience. "Snowwhite" is a fairy play, written for pure love of the story. "The Dream Play" is a *tour de force* of the imagination and a burning symbol of the love for his fellow-men with which he emerged from his mental crisis of 1900. For Strindberg to a great extent came out of his bitterness, his hatred of woman, his mysticism, and his violent egotism. He came to feel himself as only a part in a great living world. He died a Socialist, and was hailed at labour demonstrations as a comrade.

We should forget the bogey of the "pathological" which has kept us prejudiced against Strindberg. He was too honest with himself not to reveal his weaknesses with his strength, and unless we are pathological ourselves we need not fear imbibing the one along with the other. What we have particularly to get from Strindberg is that fine stimulus of the intellectual dynamic flowing more richly in his plays than it has flowed in any other modern dramatic author. If we will allow for his originality the same license as to method that we allow to anybody else, we shall not be troubled at all by his strangeness of form. And if we allow our minds to vibrate with his we shall be the richer for many an intense intellectual experience.

The plays of Björnson, Ibsen's friend and contemporary, have long made their place in the German theatre, but seem almost too naïve to have much driving power into foreign lands. There is in them nothing of Ibsen's fiercely tight intellectual coherence, and there is a certain obviousness of effect, even obviousness of character reading, which is quite unexpected. They seem unduly perturbed over traits of personality which a child

would notice, and they tend to be too consciously moralistic for their body of human content. Björnson, who is loved in Norway chiefly as a poet, is much more a poet in his plays than a thinker. He has scenes of very effective satire, in Ibsen's manner, and other scenes of cumulative dramatic intensity in the style of Sardou. But now and again things seem to slip from his grasp. It is the spirit of the man which is impressive, for his thoughts are rather too obvious. And the spirit, as felt in his plays, is of the sort that lifts an audience out of any attitude of reasonableness, and makes it glow, for the moment, by pure force of human sympathy or inspiring language. "When the New Wine Sparkles," written by the old poet only a few weeks before his death, is charged with the glow of youth, and has the poetic element abundantly beneath and beyond its somewhat involved plot. "The Bankrupts" traces the effect of sudden poverty on a well-to-do family, and "The Newly Married Couple" shows with considerable delicacy of analysis the adjustments made between husband and wife after marriage. "Beyond Human Power," much acted in Germany, is in two parts. In its manner of developing the mystical atmosphere out of a human and realistic plot, this work is highly typical. The sphere of activity in which man can accomplish things by conscious action is limited; beyond it lies the great cloudy region in which he is face to face with infinite forces. It is this region that Björnson tries to make us feel, not by mystical means, but by sheer sympathy with the men whose strivings carry them into the mystical. The first part of the play has to do with the personal and psychological. A faith-healer, much loved in the country-side, tries the final test, before a committee of sceptical ministers, of curing his wife of her

life-long sickness. She walks at his command, for the first time in years—and falls dead. In the second part it is the social and material world that is the object of struggle. The faith-healer's son has consecrated himself to the struggle of the working class against their employers, being convinced that this is the only way to further the improvement of man. He calls a meeting of the employers to discuss the men's demands, and gives the signal for the dynamite explosion which sends him and most of the employers into eternity. But such a problem, too, is beyond human power. Credo and Spero, two symbolical figures in the last act, point the moral.

Germany was the first foreign country to feel strongly the influence of Ibsen. In the late eighties there were stirrings, and with the establishment, in 1890, of the Freie Bühne, the new realistic and sociological drama had flung its challenge to German art. In the succeeding decade Germany was the leader in the new drama. The almost simultaneous composition, in three different lands, of "Magda," by Sudermann, "Blanchette," by Brieux, "Mrs. Warren's Profession," by Bernard Shaw, and "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," by Pinero (all brilliant dating points for the new movement), is a remarkable coincidence. But Germany had the head start, and it was Sudermann and Hauptmann who were looked upon as the leaders in the drama of the future during the nineties. This was largely due, no doubt, to the peculiar condition of Germany, which was then just starting a new era, having been freed from the reign of the Iron Chancellor and having brought to open consciousness and discussion the social and political subjects which had been rankling unexpressed in loyal German hearts for half a century. The labour

movement of the time, centring in political Socialism, was the great dynamic of the new German drama. Hauptmann's choosing of dramatic subjects from the lowest social classes was a sign of the shifting of the centre of human gravity due to the rising importance of the working class. And the new drama had, to a tremendous extent, a tone of partisanship with the proletariat. More than that, it was actually the proletariat—the labour unions and the conscious political Socialists—who gave the first widespread support to the new drama. Hauptmann's play, "The Weavers," for years the storm centre of the labour question in German drama, was first performed by the radical "Free Folk Stage." But what is still more important is the fact that the considerable middle-class application of the new drama was vitally connected with the proletarian movement. Many who lived through the time probably had no notion that there was any connection between Sudermann's "Honour" or "Magda," and Hauptmann's "The Weavers." But every tenet of iconoclasm in this middle-class drama—the breaking-up of conventional moral codes, the emphasis upon woman as a responsible individual, the denial of traditional authority on every hand—is implicit and explicit in the philosophy of the labour movement which antedated it. Moral codes, said the newly conscious working-class, work out to the benefit of those who made them—the middle and upper classes. Woman, because of the growth of modern industrial machinery, has become increasingly an economic unit; she must become an ethical and political unit. As for authority, continued the working-class, *we* haven't got it, so it is sure to work against us and we had better deny it. And this philosophy swept up to a certain extent into the middle class, and was vehe-

mently discussed in drama. All this may sound improbable to an American, but the whole struggle has been carried on for a much longer time and in a much smaller space in Germany, and the ideas consequently had a greater rebound. The chief upheaval in Germany in the last half century has been that of the proletariat, and the chief forces toward inner change have come from it. Equal suffrage, for instance, has been for years a demand of the German Social-Democratic party, and has only recently become a middle-class fad.

But all this vehemence in the realistic drama in Germany has died out. For the last ten years Germany's production in drama has been disappointing. Hauptmann and Sudermann are still writing, but the former is busily repeating himself and the latter is the scorn of all Germans of any class—"a mere Jew," they say, "a sensation-monger." Certainly Sudermann's recent dramatic output has been negligible. The dominating figure in present-day German drama is Wedekind (who will be discussed in another chapter), a man so strange, so perverse, so anarchic, and withal so talented and so courageous, that he "fits" in no category yet invented. In a general way he is typical of Germany of the last ten years, in his violent reaction to the flatly realistic and "well made" play, in his morbid subject-matter and his defiance of rules. It is difficult to name the man who in Germany is "the continuer of the Sudermann tradition." If he is known he is probably not worth naming. The tradition of the nineties seems to have broken off short. In its place we have the unclassifiable plays of Wedekind, the poetic drama of Hofmannsthal, the imaginative plays of Hardt and Eulenberg. We have further the hang-over production of a number of the second-rate men of the nineties. And we have a limited

output of very delightful comedies, such as Roessler's "The Five Frankforters," successfully played in this country, and Birinski's "The Dance of Fools," which formed the basis for a musical comedy which died a premature American death. But with the single exception of Wedekind, there is not a single author in modern Germany whose work has the drive that will enable it to cross the border and plough up the literary field in a foreign land. Incenierung has the attention of present day Germans in the theatre. The "artists" want plays written for Inscenierung. The realists want Inscenierung made for realism. In the meantime, a brilliant theatrical era with classical and imported plays, but no significant current dramatic literature.

In Austria, however, there is a continuous output of comedies of the highest order. Arthur Schnitzler and Hermann Bahr write as brilliantly, on the whole, as any comedian since Wilde. The Parisian influence which is traditionally operative in Vienna, seems to have given them a deftness of touch which a Prussian writer never has. At the same time there is in their characterization a certain quality, which we might suggest by the word "meatiness," which is distinctly German.

Schnitzler is a most delightful figure. The son of a Jewish physician he was himself educated to practice medicine, and served from 1886 to 1888 as second physician in the General Hospital in Vienna. His cycle of one-act plays, "Anatol," was written in the leisure hours of his early practice, purely for his amusement and that of his friends. The fact that it brought him fame is an incidental fact. Schnitzler is still a practicing physician. He still writes to please himself and amuse his friends. He is first of all a professional man, and an artist only out of the exuberance of his spirits. His

fame is still an incidental thing, a thing, so to speak, quite out of his control.

A little cleft of Puritanism still separates us from the appreciation of Schnitzler's delightful comedies—and the bridge across is slippery. The strenuously immoral life of the young Viennese dandy, which he satirises without ever once condemning, seems to us hardly a matter for laughter. We must catch the trick of observing without participating, of understanding without judging. Anatol, with one new love (at least) for each of his seven playlets, need not be imitated, and cannot be by an American, for his epicurean touch is a thing of Vienna or Paris. The condemnation we have for him is not on the grounds of grossness. Love-making, to Anatol, is a fine art, and as long as due proportion is observed the gods will not be angry.

Anatol is the hero of one after another of Schnitzler's plays—sometimes very young, sometimes past middle age, under many names and a variety of social ranks. Sometimes important things happen to him; but usually he is called upon only to observe and guide an action here and there, and take what comes to him with an understanding smile. In "The Green Cockatoo," played by Mrs. Fiske's company as a "curtain-raiser" one season, Anatol appears several times in the rôle of gallant, visiting a low wine-room in Paris on the evening of the fall of the Bastille, and serving as the butt of a dramatic irony too delicate to be understood by any of the characters. In "Liebelei," one of the best beloved of recent German plays, Anatol is still a student, a somewhat serious-minded one, not yet disillusioned, not yet come to the realisation that all things in life are equally good if accepted with equal good nature. He is having an affair with a married woman, and takes it far

too much to heart. The light touch is missing; the error in taste must be rectified. A fellow student introduces him to little Christine, who is young and is looking for a hero lover. It was intended that flirting should cure love. But our Liebelei kills souls instead. For the youth takes seriously a duel with the husband he has wronged, is killed, and leaves Christine with the double tragedy of her lover's death and the knowledge of another woman in his life.

And so people have come to think that Mr. Schnitzler is himself Anatol, that he capitalises his sins for gain and writes his misdemeanors into diverting literature. People do not know him. Mr. Schnitzler is, as we have said, a practising physician, a man of science, a clear-brained, clear-eyed, lovable man, whose art is only the second fact about him. It is the scientific feeling for detail that has made him the world's master in the one-act play. It is the scientific fascination for pure ideas which dictated his most impressive play—"Professor Bernhardi." Professor Bernhardi is a physician and a Jew, one of the specialists in a great Vienna hospital. He refuses a Catholic priest admittance to the bedside of a dying patient who had not asked for absolution. The affair is taken up as a scandal. Bernhardi tries to stand on the scientific principle that his duty was to protect his patient in her last hours from the knowledge of approaching death. In a third act, which shows a session of the directing board of the hospital, prejudice and principle come to fine and subtle interplay. Bernhardi is forced from the hospital and condemned to a short term in prison. He comes out wiser, and not more violent.

Here, decidedly, is a play of very special calibre. It has but one woman character, and that for only a

THE RECEPTION HALL

THE DUCHESS'S BEDROOM

TWO SCENES FOR A POETIC PLAY, DESIGNED BY SAMUEL HUME

"These scenes show how a rearrangement of the same simple elements will produce a different effect and create quite a different mood."

Photographs by Roper, Cambridge

moment. It has absolutely no love interest. Except for the incident with the priest in the first act, there is an utter absence of any obvious action. From first act to last the play is talk. Moreover, it has a beginning and a middle, but no "end," for Bernhardi returns to his practice surrounded by the same base antisemitic prejudice as at the first. By all the rules it is undramatic and not legitimate drama. If the hearer has no brains or no interest in the clash of ideas, the play is a bore. But all this Schnitzler freely risked because as a thinker he was fascinated by the ideas, and as an artist he was fascinated with the problem of throwing them into artistic form. The play is a "legitimate" play because it fascinated thinking audiences throughout Germany (it was banned in Austria). If other audiences are bored by it they may go and see "Charley's Aunt," which is no less "legitimate," but somewhat less intelligent. To those who can appreciate it "Professor Bernhardi" has a very personal value, in showing that finest type of artist—the artist who is not afraid to think.

Quite different from Schnitzler in personality is Hermann Bahr. Bahr is the "literary man" par excellence —by which it is understood that he is chiefly occupied with the artistic method by which he manipulates his observations of life. There is no continental author who can write whole acts of more delightful dialogue which are organic parts of a steadily developing comic idea. Bahr's moral world is much like Schnitzler's in his comedies. The world may be a bad sermon, but it is a very good joke. If you must withhold your condemnation from what is somebody else's business, must you at the same time withhold your laughter?

It is said that after the brilliant success which Mr. Belasco made of Bahr's delightful "The Concert" in

New York he contracted for Bahr's next play, sight unseen, paying cash down. The next play was "The Children." Therein two middle-aged friends are the proud fathers of two children, a son and a daughter, who promptly fall in love with one another. The daughter confides in her father. Donnerblitzen! The boy is her half-brother! Presently the boy's father comes to his friend with a horrible confession on his lips: the girl is his son's half-sister. Thus do two wrongs most sweetly make a right. There is nothing in the way of the marriage. The two men must heartily forgive each other, and all goes merrily. The play, needless to say, was not acted in New York, and Mr. Belasco lost his advance payment.

The detachment necessary to view such a plot as this as comic material illustrates the totally different viewpoint of the cosmopolitan European audience. It is an extreme example of what is implicit in nearly all French and Viennese comedy—the objectivity of material, especially dear to the comic artist. But the literary ability necessary to keep such material in the comic mood is very great. For when the mere story would become matter for the district police station, Bahr is constantly saving it by the humanity or the human-seemingness of his characters. In "Principle" he shows a rich middle class family imbued with an ill digested democratic ideal. They discover that the son of the house has "wronged" the cook. Nothing to do but to force the son to marry her, even at the cost of the family's standing in the outside world. The mother goes to the kitchen to impart the glad tidings to the girl. The latter is at first dumfounded at such absurdity. The gentleman hadn't intended marriage; he was only on a little lark; for her part she is very well satisfied. Then

she becomes indignant at this attempt to make her marry the young idiot. Besides, she has her own lover, and they are to be married soon. Would Madame destroy her happiness? And so all ends happily. "The Concert," which shows the lady pianist, infatuated with her teacher, receiving lessons from his wife in the ways of caring for his artistic moods, is one of the most delightful comedies ever seen on the American stage.

Bahr's greatest achievement is his dialogue, which, without straining for farce effect, reveals the numerous nooks of character in every line. It is not a dialogue of "points," and never one of verbal play. Nor is it a dialogue of ideas. It depends for its laughs on a personal acquaintance with the characters, who, from their first entrance, seem to stand before the audience in all their humanity. It is not a noisy type of comedy, this, but one which seems to crowd into two and a half hours all the fun that lies latent in human personality.

The smaller countries have been contributing important plays to the European theatre. Leaving aside for the present Hungary and Belgium, whose remarkable contributions will be mentioned in another chapter, we may notice for a moment Holland, which has a vigorous theatrical life of its own. The plays of Hermann Heijermanns have some years since established themselves in European theatres. Heijermanns recalls the realism of the nineties. He writes ex parte, an apologist of the working class, whose side it is his only interest to present. If there is a continuer of the Hauptmann tradition Heijermanns is the man. His power in presenting sympathetic human figures from the lower class is quite the equal of Hauptmann's. His partisanship is even more pronounced.

"The Good Hope," his masterpiece, he has made a

sort of epic of the sea. There is a dishonest employer, who sends on a voyage an unseaworthy boat, expecting it to be sunk, that he may reap the insurance. The fisher people, who are giving their sons to this financial coup, are shown in all their human helplessness in the power of these tactics. But especially it is the sea, as an evil genius, that dominates the spirit of the play. The third act, which takes place while the Good Hope is still unheard from, is a collection of stories of sea-tragedy, told by the women gathered together in the hut on a stormy night—an impressive passage of prose lyricism. "The Coat of Mail" shows militarism, as it presents itself in a small country, where the only use for an army is to repress strikes. "The Ghetto" shows the prejudices of Jewry against the intermarriage of the second generation with the Christians. "All Souls" is a work of peculiar inspiration. Here Heijermanns shows religious prejudice and impulsive natural life in full conflict. Rita, an illegitimate mother, is sheltered by the village minister, who thus brings scandal down upon his head. He is Christianly forgiving. But the woman is quite unrepentant, and when her lover returns she goes away with him joyously. The minister, who in the meantime has been driven from his pulpit, can only say a hopeless "Farewell," checkmated by his half-step toward freedom. Heijermanns is not a mere "photographic" realist. He has an imaginative feeling for character, and more especially a sense of the poetry of language which distinguishes the literary artist.

England has in the last quarter century produced a dramatic literature important out of all proportion to the limited prosperity of her dramatic life. We are constantly under the danger of underestimating this English drama by taking too narrow a view of it. It

INTERIOR OF THE OLD OPERA HOUSE IN BAYREUTH
A typical eighteenth century auditorium of the Italian style.

is not easy to judge it by any set standard. For whereas Russian drama has been distinguished chiefly by moral earnestness, German by emotional vigour, and French by technical mastery, English drama shows before all else intellectual power. And our dogmas incline to give precedence to the emotional and the technical elements, regarding intellect as an affair of dry books and parliamentary debates.

In Pinero and Jones England had a lively native drama before the influence of Ibsen arrived. But this influence promptly showed itself, first in the enlarged range of subject-matter, and next in the cleaning-up of technical processes—asides, arbitrary entrances, and the like. We commonly date modern English drama from Pinero's "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," and the renovated Jones and Pinero pretty much dominated the English theatre during the nineties. Theorists found abundant matter to praise in the work of these two admirable technicians. But when the centre of interest shifted to another group of writers the cause of the "well made play" seemed to have lost the fight. Bernard Shaw, who understood the well-made play quite adequately, and wrote one every now and then by way of variety, was chiefly interested in vitalising audiences with his ideas. And with a courage and clear-headedness which are rare among dramatists (whose practical success always seems to depend upon pleasing the greatest number in the easiest way) he continued to write what pleased him, throwing all the powers of one of the most vigorous digestive brains of the age into the theatre.

This courage was continued in his close friend, Granville Barker, in some ways the most masterful writer the modern English drama has produced. What chiefly dis-

tinguishes Barker from lesser dramatistis is what distinguishes big men from little men generally—brains. Barker rejected the dogma of the well made play as completely as Shaw rejected the dogma of the romantic love-affair. His plays are filled with passages of "just talk," talk which it is a rare privilege to read or hear, but talk which has nothing to do with a "conflict of wills." It would be foolish to deny that he understands the presenting of character on the stage, or the building up of an effective theatrical scene. His starting-point is the idea, which dictates the whole form and content of his drama. His reputation as a dramatist has been slow to develop, partly because he has insisted upon writing what he likes instead of what the crowd likes, and partly because he has been averse to letting his plays be performed by actors who do not understand what he is driving at. Certainly his comparatively slight reputation is not wholly to be explained by the statement that his plays are "undramatic." Shaw is usually quite as undramatic. But Shaw, still suspect in England, has a prodigious reputation on the continent. He is to the ever-generous Germans "Europe's best jester." The Hofburgtheater of Vienna was only too glad to get his "Pymalion" for a first performance on any stage, and became the hero of an international literary event by staging it. Shaw has made his way by force of brain and wit without making concessions to the mob. And Barker could doubtless do the same. But he is chiefly interested in his business of play-producing, in which he is teaching London as fast as she can learn. Play-writing is his side activity.

But that need not prevent us from appreciating his plays at their full remarkable value. We feel in his dialogue an abundance of brain power which we meet

nowhere else save in Strindberg. We feel that quality which is the excellent basis for the English love of compromise—the ability to see both sides, to evaluate all the forces truly. Barker is a partisan, as earnest a moralist as Brieux, but not a blind partisan. To read or see his plays, after the scarlet emotionalism of German or French realism, is to feel a cold, purifying winter wind. But now and again this intellectual vigour becomes translated into emotionalism of strange power. After a whole act of esoteric political discussion in "Waste" we have a short love-scene, one of the most wonderful in all modern drama, which reveals every element of the emotion of the two people, but carries us along with their feelings. This ability to show the inside of the clock as well as its face, as Dr. Johnson put it, is the great contribution of intellectual validity to the making of plays.

In "The Marrying of Ann Leete" the heroine revolts, as so many English girls are revolting nowadays, and runs away with her gardener. Notice one fact about this action of hers: it explains much about the "intellectual drama" which Barker represents. Ann Leete eloped with her gardener for eugenic *reasons*, but from emotional *motives*. She was not a puppet in her action. But she was nevertheless the exponent of a philosophy. The playwright understood and showed both aspects of the case. He kept her flesh and blood, but showed her as raw material for ideas.

"The Voysey Inheritance" is a study of the ethics of business dishonesty, which we have met with before in Giacosa's "The Stronger." "Waste" shows the waste to society resulting from stringent application of moral codes—waste equally in the weak woman who commits abortion out of fear, and in the strong man who is

forced from public life by scandal. The third act, in which politicians discuss all aspects of the case, is much like the third act of "Professor Bernhardi"—round-table debate in both cases, but utterly absorbing to one who is willing to bring his brain with him to the theatre. "The Madras House" is Barker's study of the place held by sex in modern life. The Madras House manufactures women's clothes—that is one of the starting-points. Sex is commercially profitable, very profitable. The fashion-setter, followed slavishly by all English ladies who are *comme il faut*, is a certain Parisian damsel with whom one would not dare live in the same block. So the question is discussed, partly by an Englishman who has become Mohammedan in order to be consistent in his attitude toward women. The dramatis personæ shift in each act. Only one of them appears in all four. It is like Brieux's "La Robe Rouge," viewing one subject from four different angles. The play is amazing in its broadness and seeming completeness. It is one of the best statements of Feminism, from the personal standpoint, that has ever appeared.

John Galsworthy makes the well made play as well as any Englishman now living. But he is too big a man to be bound by it. His keen sense of proportion and fitness comes from the artist in him, which is always detached and critical, but always sympathetic. His "problem" plays state their problem, but do not solve it. "Strife" show labour and capital wasting themselves fruitlessly in their refusal to compromise. "Justice" shows how our legal procedure "but fans the wheat and saves the chaff with a most evil fan." "The Pigeon" is a delightful character comedy on the impulse of sweet charity in men. "The Fugitive" is much like Brieux's "La Femme Seule," showing how society bullies the

woman who tries to be independent of men. In all this Galsworthy's touch is deft and sure. His characters act in their own right. He is their observer, but not their manipulator. His seriousness is always reserved, his humour always a trifle bitter. In combining strong human sympathy and sensitive artistic reserve he is more like Turgenieff than like any other English writer.

Bernard Shaw is one of the few dramatists who became well known in the nineties, of whom it can be said that he hasn't been largely repeating himself since. His plays have undergone no striking "new manner." They have become rather more discursive and loose jointed, more concerned with ideas themselves and less with obvious action. There has been less writing with a particular end in view, as when "The Man of Destiny" and "Captain Brassbound's Conversion" were written for Ellen Terry. There has been, in short, a fairly steady tendency away from the type of play prevalent in the nineties, such as "Candida" on the one hand and "The Devil's Disciple" on the other. The newer Shaw play is likely to be "a debate in one sitting," like "Misalliance," with the airy instructions that the curtain might be lowered whenever the audience began to get bored. The topic of discussion becomes more and more the play itself, as in "Getting Married," in which every possible attitude toward the estate of matrimony, seemingly, is personified in some character who sits in the old Gothic kitchen and thrashes it out with all comers from the Greengrocer to the Bishop. Here the plot is merely the progress of the discussion, from the proprieties of the approaching wedding up to a beautiful contract for a universal marriage arrangement, and down again into the slough of human cross-purposes. And here and there in his output is a play like "The

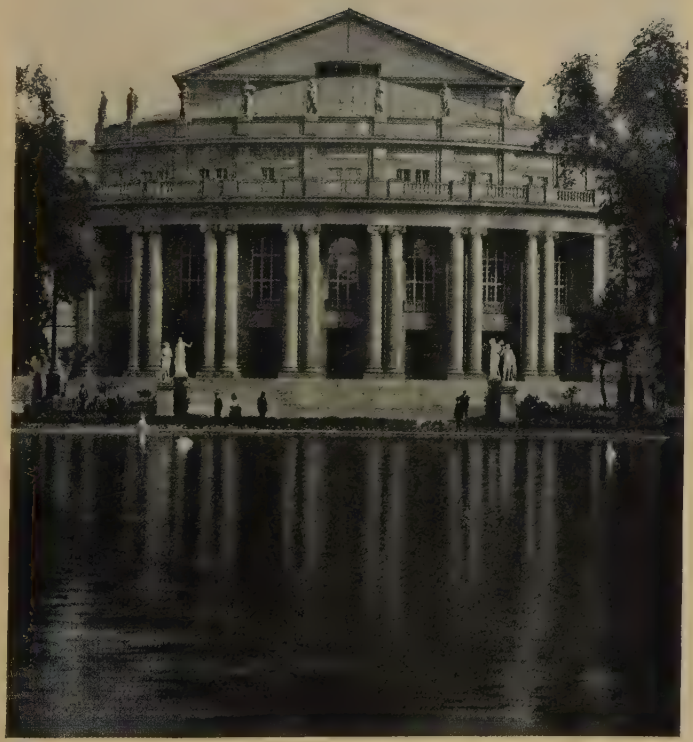
Showing-up of Blanco Posnet," banned in England because of some supposed blasphemy; or "The Dark Lady of the Sonnets" in which the Bard engagingly pleads Shaw's own views concerning him. And then "Fanny's First Play," most delightful of "pot-boilers," and a "box-office success," among the best of them in recent years. And within twelve months "Androcles and the Lion," a whimsical dramatisation of the struggle of Christian and Pagan; "Great Catherine," one more addition to Shaw's list of historical figures; and "Pygmalion," which Germany seems to have adopted as its own. No regularity here; no fixed purpose discoverable. But, be it noted in passing, a freshness and spontaneity of output which belies the ancient charge that Shaw is a "cerebral" writer, without the artist's joy in creation. His freedom of artistic form is one of the most refreshing things about him. But the intellectual Shaw has not stood still. He seems to have determined not to be caught growing old, and when his Socialist comrades are busy refining the Marxism or Fabianism of the nineties he propounds the revolutionary doctrine of equal pay for all adults in the state, regardless of the service performed. He gives us in the most compact form and most vigorous of English, a discourse on marriage (in the preface to "Getting Married") which, though eminently practical, starts from the most extreme premise it is possible to find. Though there is little to be said *in general* about the newer Shaw, there is so much mental stimulation to be had in detail that the world could easily stand another book about the Shaw of the last three years. It only needs to be said that this man, after a quarter of a century of fighting uncompromisingly for the things he wanted, has become a brilliant commercial success.

Of the remaining English dramatists one must mention Barrie, who, with "What Every Woman Knows" and the immortal "Peter Pan" has been steadily increasing his reputation and his bank account; and Arnold Bennett, inveterate pot-boiler, who has turned his attention to the stage with the airy remark that writing for the theatre requires no special knowledge or technique, and has produced three or four delightful comedies and many a fat royalty sheet out of his efforts. The late Stanley Houghton, author of "Hindle Wakes," and one of the most gifted of the younger men, had a scarcely equalled ability at combining the polemic idea with the diverting story. Rudolph Besier is still being given his chance to fulfil the splendid promise of his early play "Don." And two English women, Elizabeth Baker with "Chains," and Githa Sowerby with "Rutherford and Son," have easily taken their place among the dramatists of the second rank. The former play is a study in monotony; and the latter the familiar story of tainted business and the ethical struggle of the second generation. But quite out of this class and among the best, or nearly there, one should mention the poet, John Masefield, author of "Nan" and "Pompey the Great." "Nan" is one of the loveliest of plays, a tragedy of simple people which seems to rise at times to Shakespearian dignity. "Pompey" can almost stand beside Shaw's "Cæsar and Cleopatra" as a pioneer in what will surely some day become an influential form of drama—the historical play in modern but lyric prose. The unusual talents shown by Mr. Masefield are equally those of word, plot, and character.

Off in the corner of the Empire a group of writers, clustering around the Abbey Theatre of Dublin, have written a number of realistic comedies which are quite

as permanent additions to English literature as the plays of Oscar Wilde. These plays are almost as well known among English-speaking nations as those of Shaw, and their virtues need no eulogy to make them appreciated. Shaw has given the highest praise to Lady Gregory, the most notable of these writers. The Abbey Theatre has been almost as masterful at self-advertisement as Shaw himself, and the early struggles of the institution are well known. The moral is obvious; this local activity, chiefly amateur in spirit, produced in a few years a body of dramatic literature as permanent and almost as notable as the two score or more of London theatres were able to achieve in two decades. The Abbey Theatre is the finest text for the apologist for localism in art.

The one thoroughly encouraging thing that is to be said about the American drama is that it has a future rather than a past. The division into "high-brow" and "low-brow" well expresses the two extremes that dominate American dramatic output, both without any especial courage. The former is industriously copying foreign masterpieces without imitating their boldness of form and message. The latter is as industriously following the fashions of Broadway, and turning out a type of play so "up to the minute" that a delay of three months in production is the difference between success and failure. The critic has a sorry time reviewing this dramatic output and trying to separate the worthy from the unworthy. On the whole, the "low-brows" are right in maintaining that the most valuable contributions of American drama are to be found among those plays that please the rag-tag rabble. The plays of George Adè and George Cohan, coming straight out of American life and true to it alone, are of the



EXTERIOR OF THE "LARGE" COURT THEATRE AT STUTTGART
PROFESSOR MAX LITTMANN, ARCHITECT

stuff that made the Abbey Theatre plays and the great Russian comedies. Europe, while maintaining a superior tone in regard to serious American literary efforts, has always been quick to recognise what was truly distinctive of America—Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Jack London and so forth. Americans have never so true an eye for their national product as the Germans and Russians have. And so it is the American comedies which have chiefly represented American drama abroad. George Cohan is now one of the most sought-after dramatists in London theatres. Miss Mayo's "Baby Mine" was recently acted in Paris, and the French liked it. Serious American plays, on the other hand, have with few exceptions failed in Europe, amid the sneers of the critics at American "crudeness."

However, the serious plays, though they lack any vestige of intellectual power, often come out of American life, as regards externals if not as regards the spirit. Charles Klein's "The Lion and the Mouse," slippery as it is when regarded as a work of art, was really a noteworthy achievement, since it ranked at the time as a serious reflection of the American social conscience. Since it opened the way there have been any number of vigorous plays expressing the state of the public mind on matters of politics and business.

Probably the most able of the serious American dramatists, in point of execution, is Eugene Walter, who in "The Wolf" and "The Easiest Way" wrote plays worthy of being classed with the best European dramas. No American playwright can equal him in the writing of realistic dialogue, which is dramatic and characteristic and still true to life. Edward Sheldon, exuberantly trying his hand at many things at once, has written a number of plays in which a lively sense of

the stage often atones for the lack of what we must call an artistic conscience. Augustus Thomas has brought something of his own into American plays in his fine newly acquired sense of finesse in dialogue (a most un-American thing in most people's minds). He is one of the few American playwrights who really understands and respects French plays. Moreover he is one of the few successful American writers who is sincere in trying to say something in his plays, and often lands a failure through too much zeal.

Charles Rann Kennedy, though a native of England, has done most of his work in America. Here we have a true "high-brow" who has to his credit at least one "box-office success"—"The Servant in the House." This play, admirable alike as a sermon and as a technical achievement in dramaturgy, was one of the memorable things in American stage history. Mr. Kennedy's increasing mysticism and symbolism have helped to keep him from any fruitful connection with the commercial stage since. Of quite another calibre, though no less sincere, is Joseph Medill Patterson, whose plays, "The Fourth Estate," "Rebellion," "Dope" and "By-Products" combine critical thought and observation of life with a considerable amount of dramatic ability. One of the few "unproduced dramatists" who deserve high rank among American authors is "Upton Sinclair," author of "The Machine," "The Nature Woman" and "Prince Hagen." The last named, the author states, was rejected by the New Theatre in New York on the express grounds that it "was not in accord with the principles of the founders." For Mr. Sinclair is first of all a Socialist, and all that he writes is devoted to the exposition of a proletarian philosophy. This fact has no doubt helped to keep his considerable abilities from

achieving practical success on the stage. In this characteristic, apart from the artistic value of his plays, he is ahead of his time. The day for a Socialist drama on the stage will surely come.

One should not close even such a brief listing of American playwrights without mentioning Mr. Percy MacKaye. His life, from the "practical" point of view, has been one succession of failures. But they are failures of the sort that America needs more of. For Mr. MacKaye has never conceded an iota to popular effect. His verse often rises to a high level, as in the lovely "Sappho and Phaon." He is master of a certain whimsical humour which never fails to be delightful. Some of his realistic comedies have had a mild success on the stage. But his dialogue is not realistic in spirit and his plots incline too much to the arbitrary. The thing that is chiefly admirable in Mr. MacKaye's work is his courage to be himself—the virtue which, more than any other, is lacking in present-day American drama.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LITERARY FORCES: THE IMAGINATIVE DRAMATISTS

WE have observed in a former chapter that though the tendency among scene designers is all toward the imaginative, dramatic authors are still giving their best energies to realistic work. The situation seems anomalous. But the fact is that we de not realise how much imaginative work is being produced now for the theatre, and of what a high order of excellence some of it is. Certainly the reaction against the realism of the nineties has set in. In Germany there is scarcely any realistic work of distinguished quality produced. And though it cannot be said that the imaginative work is of the first quality, it is evident that the *efforts* of German authors are directed toward the poetic. France at present possesses one of the greatest poetic dramatists in all her history. In Russian drama imagination is exuberant. And in both Germany and Austria-Hungary there has appeared a certain sort of poetry-in-realism which is of the highest interest and significance for the drama of the near future. And finally, in Italy there is a poetic drama of the most impressive character.

What causes this imaginative impulse at this time it is not easy to say. Reaction from extreme realism accounts for part of it, but not all. Our scientific and mercenary age is commonly said to be hostile to the

THE PRINZREGENTEN THEATER IN MUNICH
PROFESSOR MAX LITTMANN, ARCHITECT

The three sections of the theatre building show plainly on the exterior.

poetic, but such an observer as Professor James has found the modern world to be highly idealistic, not to say credulous. It is a time when painting and music are in wildest revolutionary transitions. Perhaps the most adequate thing is to say that the modern world is full of a number of things. Among them the poetic drama will certainly find a place. And it seems true that the effort and demand for it is considerably greater than has yet been made evident. The distinguished names are not many outside of those which are universally known, such as Rostand and d'Annunzio. Much of the output, such as that of Hardt and Eulenberg in Germany, is decidedly disappointing. But the tendency is so spontaneous, and is so insistently appearing in all the nooks and crannies, that one must conclude that it has a prosperous period ahead of it.

In thinking of poetic plays at the present time we should avoid the careless habit of thinking of them as though they were in opposition to the realistic. The layman may allow his sympathies to be drawn into a controversy such as "realistic vs. poetic," without realising that the whole tournament has been arranged by interested parties. Realistic writers need not be the tough, salty customers that their opponents try to paint. There is no essential conflict between the realistic and the imaginative; there is no inconsistency between seeing life truly and thinking about it picturesquely. Again and again, in authors who are most strict to actuality, we feel touches of the tenderest poetry, or fine rhetorical passages which, while remaining true to life, prove the writer's feeling for verbal beauty. In fact the very impulse of the realistic dramatist, which is to select according to some principle of his own out of the things he sees about him in life, is

precisely that of the poet. Realistic and imaginative are here used merely to classify plays conveniently according to their outward characteristics. They do not imply any judgment on literary excellence. To one person even a grocery bill may be poetic. To another an exquisite poem may be as matter-of-fact as a grocery bill.

It is in Italy that the modern poetic play has appeared in greatest splendour. The last half century has surely seen few finer plays than "Francesca da Rimini." D'Annunzio does not need to die to gain his reputation as the great master of modern Italian prose, and though his dramatic output has been uneven he has deserved, in his best work, the almost unrivalled place he holds. In every way he is distinctive. The love that appears in his plays is a bright scarlet. Each play is weighted down with the imagery of its locale, and is executed with the highest virtuosity. "Francesca" is filled to overflowing with the spirit and lore of the Renaissance. "The Daughter of Jorio" is saturated with folk customs and imagery. "The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian" is surrounded with a clear cold atmosphere of monasticism. The scene on the battlements in the second act of "Francesca" has an emotional power that is almost unparalleled, but built up out of the simplest plot materials. As a plot-weaver d'Annunzio can be extremely deft, as in "The Daughter of Jorio," in which nearly every turn of the action depends somehow on the peculiar customs of the country. Usually, however, he plans his scenes chiefly with a view to their pictorial effect. His more realistic plays, such as "Giaconda" and "A Light Under a Bushel," lose most of the beauty that makes the poetic plays so remarkable. Sometimes, as in the last mentioned play, evil passion becomes

so all-engrossing and so meaningless that we should be glad to be rid of the whole affair. It is perhaps a pity that d'Annunzio's life has been so perturbed and uncertain. His exile from Italy (only half voluntary) resulted in a regrettable dislike for everything Italian and a desire to write in French in which the last three or four plays, none of them first rate, have been written. But for all that we might wish d'Annunzio different from what he is, we must bless the generous fortune that gave us "Francesca" and admit its author to be one of the great dramatic poets of modern times.

Another classic of modern Italian drama is Sem Benelli's tragedy, "La Cena delle Beffe" or "The Supper of Jokes." This, as one realises early in the action, was written by the hand of a master. Like "Francesca," it passes in the Renaissance—in the time of Lorenzo the Magnificent. The Italians, especially those of the Renaissance, have always loved a joke. Here the poet will give us a gorgeous one for our money. Gianetto, puny, but crafty, has been mistreated by way of sport, by two bullying brothers. Through the winking of Lorenzo he is enabled to pay them back in their own coin. He spurs his older rival on to making a fool of himself in public, and to such an extent that he is arrested as a madman. Then Gianetto calmly possesses himself of his rival's mistress. Next he sets the man's old victims to torturing him while he is in bonds. Then the man is set at liberty and Gianetto plays with him—wit against strength—with the older man realising perfectly that he has been made ridiculous, yet able to do nothing but fly into a more overpowering rage. Finally he believes he has found a chance for revenge: he will put a dagger into Gianetto's body. He has finished the deed. He sees Gianetto looking at him—and smiling. He looks

at the corpse. He has killed his own brother. And he comes out of the room of death a gibbering idiot. The joke has worked. The adroitness and sureness with which the involved plot is developed is masterly; the feeling of the Renaissance pervades the play even as it does "Francesca." The characterization, on a broad and heroic scale, is extremely vivid. The verve of a lively story well told is never failing.

Earlier plays, particularly "The Mask of Brutus," seem to be only studies for the mature poet who commences with "The Supper of Jokes." A later play, "The Love of Three Kings," made a deep impression in America, performed as an opera to Montemezzi's music. It is a story without complexity, so straightforward and naïve that it seems to come out of a mediæval ballad. Fiora, living in the Italy of darkest Christian times, is seized as wife by a conquering barbarian, and is watched by his blind old father when he is away fighting. And while the husband is thus away one day there comes Fiora's lover, whom she had loved before the intruder came. But she wishes to be true to her husband and grants the lover only a last kiss. And during this kiss the old king Archibaldo feels their presence, and though the lover escapes and Fiora denies, he senses the truth in the tone of her voice, and strangles her. Out of jealousy he had taken a personal revenge, for he had loved her in more than a fatherly way. And then Fiora's corpse is placed in the chapel in the vaults beneath the castle, for its final rites, and poison is put on her lips, for Archibaldo wishes to catch the man who loved her—with the bait of a last kiss. He succeeds, for the lover comes. But Archibaldo's son comes too, for his last kiss, and the old king can only hear the two men falling by the bier. There is a certain archaic

flavour to this story as Benelli tells it—a quality which is the creation of genius. The piece is filled with poetry, bits of symbolism or irony which arise naturally out of the action and interpret themselves without straining. The characters, individual but not particularised, seem made to be set up in mosaic in a Romanesque church. The piece is said to be an elaborate allegory on Italy, new and old. But beyond any such intention it is a great acted story, told by the means that are oldest to the story-tellers of men.

"La Gorgona," a recent play, has more of the conventional heroic flavour, but like all Benelli's works, keeps constantly high above the plane of blare and fustian. La Gorgona is a maiden of Pisa, chosen by the people to defend the city by her faithfulness and virginity while the men are away at war. Outside the walls waits an allied Florentine army of defense, pledged not to enter the city. But the son of the commander, acting at first from a particular motive of pique, steals within the walls and makes love to La Gorgona in her room. The maiden loves him, and breaks her oath of chastity. But the lover is now doomed to death by his father's oath to the Pisans. Then a bit of plot-intrigue, the return of the Pisans in triumph, and the death, unnecessary as the event proved, of the lover.

In these plays we are in a very different world from that of d'Annunzio, where the emotion is everything. For with Benelli the story comes first. He treats his fable as the old bards treated theirs, lost in it as in utter truth, unconscious of many things which refined folk might criticise, caught up in the sort of fervour that moves primitive people. Where d'Annunzio is nerves, Benelli is muscles. Benelli represents men youthful and objective; d'Annunzio represents them middle-aged and

sensual. It is a fine thing to bring into self-conscious modern drama the spirit of the great ballads. And this is what Benelli has done.

Over the works of Rostand and Maeterlinck, as well known as any modern plays of any land, we need not pause. Rostand's astonishing virtuosity and Maeterlinck's astonishing range have received their universal praise. It is a rare thing to have two such plays as "Cyrano de Bergerac" and "L'Aiglon" appear in one generation. As for Maeterlinck, he has given us in "Monna Vanna" one of the most perfect and lovely plays of modern times. As experiments, his early plays, of which "Pelléas et Mélisande" is the best known, have opened up a wide field of sensuous effect in the theatre. And his delightful fairy play, "The Blue Bird," which has been seen from one end of Europe to the other, has at least proved that his genius is not essentially morbid, as his first work made us believe. The weakness of Maeterlinck is that he is purely a literary man. He has spent much energy on books of "philosophy" that could not live a year except for their style. And his plays are apt to show this spineless softness. But the technical value of the early plays as way-showers can hardly be overestimated. For Maeterlinck was the first man to stylise the written drama.

Emile Verhaeren, though he writes in French, represents Belgium in a somewhat national way. He is primarily an impressionistic poet, an experimenter in free verse and sensuous word-imagery, and would not be mentioned in this book except for one remarkable play, "Les Aubes." His two other plays, "The Cloister" and "Philip II," which have been acted in Brussels and Paris, are too flat and uncoloured to leave much of an impression. But "Les Aubes" is unforgettable. The

"dawn" it shows is that of universal peace. The play is half-realistic, half-imaginative. It seeks to narrate how peace between the nations first began to be a reality on the earth—how Oppidomagne (presumably Paris) was besieged, and how Jacques Herénien, the "tribune," made a compact with the popular leaders in the enemy's army to deliver up the city to a peaceful entry. The officers on both sides rage. But to the soldiers on both sides the point is so obvious—they have nothing to gain by killing one another. And so the besieging army is feasted on the provisions which were stored up for the siege. A few officers had tried to use coercion—and their soldier's guns had been turned on them. Herénien is murdered in a last desperate effort on the part of the dying government, and the play ends with the funeral oration delivered by a popular leader of the once hostile army. The play is more than a pipe-dream of a sentimentalist's leisure. The sentiment, among the rank and file of European armies, is not so far from that pictured in the play, and it is growing each year by leaps and bounds. The popular uprising of Oppidomagne is pictured with obvious reference to past uprisings in Paris, and on the whole the play is given a surprising appearance of verisimilitude. And the author is able, by his own magic, to fill the reader with his own enthusiasm for the idea of peace by means that are not obvious, but some secret of his craft.

Passing over the imaginative plays of the Irish school, which are too well known to need comment here, we should notice briefly the poetic drama of modern Germany. It is disappointing, one must confess. It is hardly what we should expect from a great empire at the height of material and spiritual prosperity. It by no means matches the brilliancy of the German theatres.

It is only as a promise of better things in the future that these plays have much significance to the outside world.

Best known among the German poetic dramatists is certainly Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Yet he is known chiefly as writer of the librettos for Strauss's operas—"Elektra," "Der Rosenkavalier" and "Ariadne auf Naxos." "Elektra" is without doubt a fine piece of work. The ancient tale is retold with brilliant, though morbid, emphasis on the feelings of the heroine. It is a terrible study in the psychology of repression. For the brutal vigour of the writer's verse the German language was the ideal medium. And though in von Hofmannsthal we do not find German at its most exalted, we frequently find it at its most powerful.

But few of Hofmannsthal's plays are so firm and vigorous as "Elektra." "The Marriage of Zobeide" is an elaborate oriental piece in one act, telling the sorrows of the heroine, married to a husband she does not love, and fleeing to a lover who does not love her. "Adventurer and Singer" is only an ordinary piece of intrigue. But the one-act morality, "The Fool and Death," is a real contribution to contemporary drama. The fool is called upon by Death, the Fiddler, to depart this life. He is unwilling. Then to the sound of the fiddle comes first his dead mother, then his former sweetheart, then his old friend. Each lived only for the Fool, and what has the Fool done with this costly life of his? Yes, he is ready to die. And Death, while taking him, marvels at these beings, who explain what cannot be explained, who read what is not written, and chart paths in the eternal darkness.

Herbert Eulenberg, who has been writing plays steadily for some fifteen years, is regarded as one of the most promising of German dramatists. His orig-

inality consists in extracting a strange sort of other-worldliness out of the realistic method. His characters are never real. His plots are intricate and ever-shifting, and his meaning, if he has any, is always being buried in symbolism. Much more direct is Ernst Hardt, author of "Gudrun" and "Tantris the Fool." The former is a frank and lively tale of Vikings, the men fighting and the women intriging over the Princess Gudrun. "Tantris" is a reworking of the Tristan legend, in which Tristan reappears to his Isolde in the disguise of a fool, and is put to severe tests by her to prove his identity. He endures the test—and leaves her forever.

An unexpected and reassuring note in modern Germany is struck by Karl Schönherr, whose play "Faith and Fireside" was an overwhelming popular success a few years ago. Schönherr has for some years been an occasional dramatist, dealing almost solely with the peasant class. In "Faith and Fireside" he struck the heroic vein. He tells a warm-hearted story of the Swiss Protestants suffering under the religious persecution of Austria. The tale and the style are so far removed from the self-conscious sensuality of much modern German literature, that it seems a startling event. Moreover the play is in itself a fine achievement—the dignity of Schiller without his bombast.

For the end of this chapter we have reserved two men who cannot properly be classed anywhere. The first is Ferenc Molnar, who some years ago made one of the popular successes of the season with "The Devil," and then passed out of sight. He has broadened and deepened in the meantime. "The Devil" was a realistic play in form, but its success was due to the imagination, or the pseudo-imagination, represented by its infernal hero. Since then Molnar has dealt much in the super-

natural. But he is more than a mere theatrical magician. For in "Lilliom" he has written a play that must be set down as the work of genius. Lilliom is a good-for-nothing of Buda Pesth. He marries a stupid little girl, finds work, is discharged, is horrified at the news that he will soon be expected to provide for another member of the family; he arranges with a pal to do a profitable piece of highway robbery, gambles away his share before the job is pulled off, and throws himself under a passing railway train. He is tried for suicide and other sins, before the magistrate of the suicide court of Hell. He refuses to repent for anything, and when he is about to enter his fourteen-year torment asks for a cigarette. At the end of fourteen years he returns to earth, being given the chance to show how his soul has improved during his infernal residence. Lilliom has not improved. He will never improve. It is against his religion. The detectives of Hell take him back to his punishment.

The tone of harsh laughter that pervades this play is the work of a dramatist who knows his business every inch of the way. Lilliom is one of those characters who stand for a universal human trait. And a human trait was never presented in more engaging manner than in Molnar's play.

And finally, there is Frank Wedekind. Nobody has yet succeeded in classifying him—except, to the satisfaction of some, as an immoral dramatist. The classification "immoral" might be allowed to stand, except that it would be quite inadequate. His plays are filled with the most strenuously immoral people that were ever gathered together under one author's name. In "The Box of Pandora" he has apparently tried to exhibit every known type of sexual degenerate. Decent

people appear in his plays only to be laughed at. And yet—to see this is only to see the superficial side of the man. Wedekind is not the beast that some would paint him. Isn't it possible that he is laughing, not at decency, but at the Germany of to-day which is so unnaturally interested in the contents of Pandora's Box? But he will not allow himself to be explained. If he seems to have been reasonable or consistent for a moment, he immediately contradicts himself—and laughs at his observer. His dialogue has a mordant brilliancy that is rarely equalled. It is a dialogue bristling with "points." It is, in short, the work of the former editor of the German comic weekly "Simplicissimus." Wedekind's plays are "Simplicissimus" put on the stage.

Wedekind is known in this country chiefly by "The Awakening of Spring," which was his earliest performed work. In it he seemed to be a sort of apostle of rational education for children. But the idea was soon dispelled. There is nothing of the apostle about Wedekind. He is only a joke-maker out of "Simplicissimus." He may have deep moral convictions, but his business does not consist in them. His business is to make jokes. And through a long list of somewhat formless plays he has jeeringly added to his gallery of characters from modern German life—with a biting wit and a command over the resources of the German language, that place him at the head of the German dramatists of to-day.

CHAPTER XIV

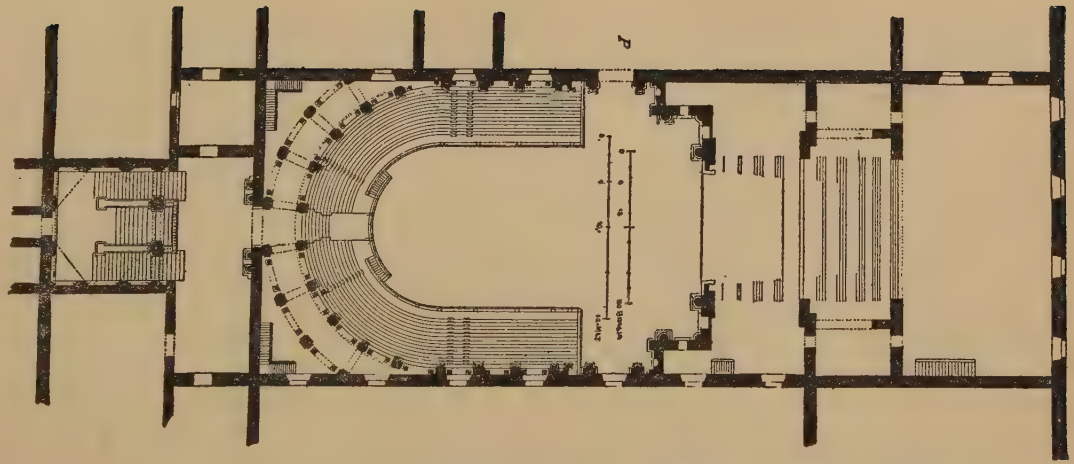
THE SOCIAL FORCES: MODERN THEATRE ARCHITECTURE

A GLANCE at the theatres of the eighteenth century will convince us how vastly removed our contemporary theatre structure is from its essential purpose. For our theatre, on its architectural side, is simply one of the many eighteenth century elements that have been carried over into modern life. While the meaning has changed utterly, the form, the hull, has been retained. The modern theatre building is an archaism.

For our theatre architecture, like the royal subvention, is a remnant, a "hang-over," from the days when art was a mere ornament for the aristocracy. The royal subventioned theatre, in Germany at least, has been partially remoulded until it approximates, in some measure, its modern democratic purpose. And to a certain extent, of course, the modern theatre building has been worked over until its archaic form is not so troublesome. But essentially it remains the theatre of royalty and of the court. Since it was established, the whole view of society, including that of its artistic life, has been changed; whereas the eighteenth century thought of society as developed "from the top down," we think of it as developed "from the bottom up." That is, speaking broadly, our laws, customs, kings and governments, are to us the product of the people; to the

eighteenth century mind the people were the product of the laws, customs, kings and governments. With such an absolute change of front in our view of society (and of society's theatres) there is demanded an equally radical change of front in the basis and method for developing its art institutions (including its theatre buildings). But until the last few years nothing of the sort has been attempted; we have been content to modify the worst features of the out-moded aristocratic theatre, and make it serve as best it could.

The modern theatre started, of course, in a thoroughly democratic way. It was at first no more than a performance of wandering players or jugglers in the open street, while the common people stood on the pavement (corresponding to the Elizabethan pit) and those who lived in the houses adjoining the street sat at their windows, which corresponded to the Elizabethan gallery or to the loges of the modern opera house. Or the play—a "mystery" or "miracle"—was performed on the church steps, the people standing or sitting on the grass, while the honoured guests perhaps had special seats built for them around the sides. But this democratic art, like most of the democratic arts of the Middle Ages, was attached by the aristocracy and was set to work ornamenting their lazy lives. So the primitive form of theatre was made into a fashionable playhouse with the materials at the disposal of the kings and dukes. The Theatre Farnese at Parma, for instance, was modelled on the old Roman amphitheatre (a true prototype of our modern "horse-shoe" theatre). Or theatrical performances, ballets or masques, were given in one of the larger rooms of the palace, the stage being constructed at one end, and boxes built along the walls. This three-sided auditorium was only another and more



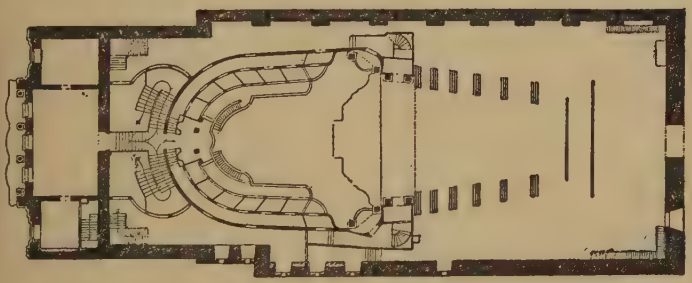
From Hammitzsch, "Der Moderne Theaterbau," Wasmuth, Berlin.

GROUND PLAN OF THE THEATRE FARNESE IN PARMA.

A typical Italian theatre of the early seventeenth century. The prototype of the "horseshoe" auditorium.

vicious form of the horse-shoe, which has continued down to our day in such structures as the Residenz Theater at Munich or the old Opera House at Bayreuth. The Court Theatre in Vienna under the Emperor Leopold had its loges built on three sides of a square.

In these three-sided auditoriums, when the stage was built out from the fourth wall, the side boxes offered a fairly unobstructed view. But as the scene was placed

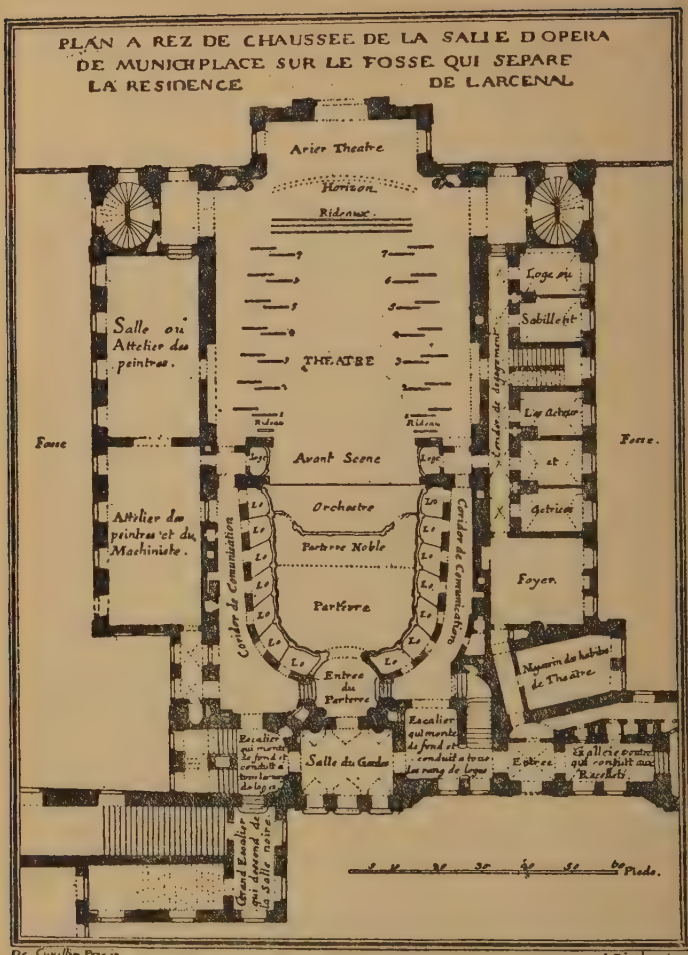


From Hammitzsch, "Der Moderne Theaterbau," Wasmuth, Berlin.

GROUND PLAN OF THE OLD OPERA HOUSE IN BAYREUTH.
Typical of all the vices of the Italian Theatre.

back at some distance behind the proscenium, the side boxes became more and more useless. A modification (slight, on the whole) into the horse-shoe or semicircle, was all that was considered necessary to meet this new condition. But this modification frequently left many bad loges on the sides, as any one who has visited a European opera house can testify. Still there were enough good seats for the aristocracy, and the tradition was allowed to continue.

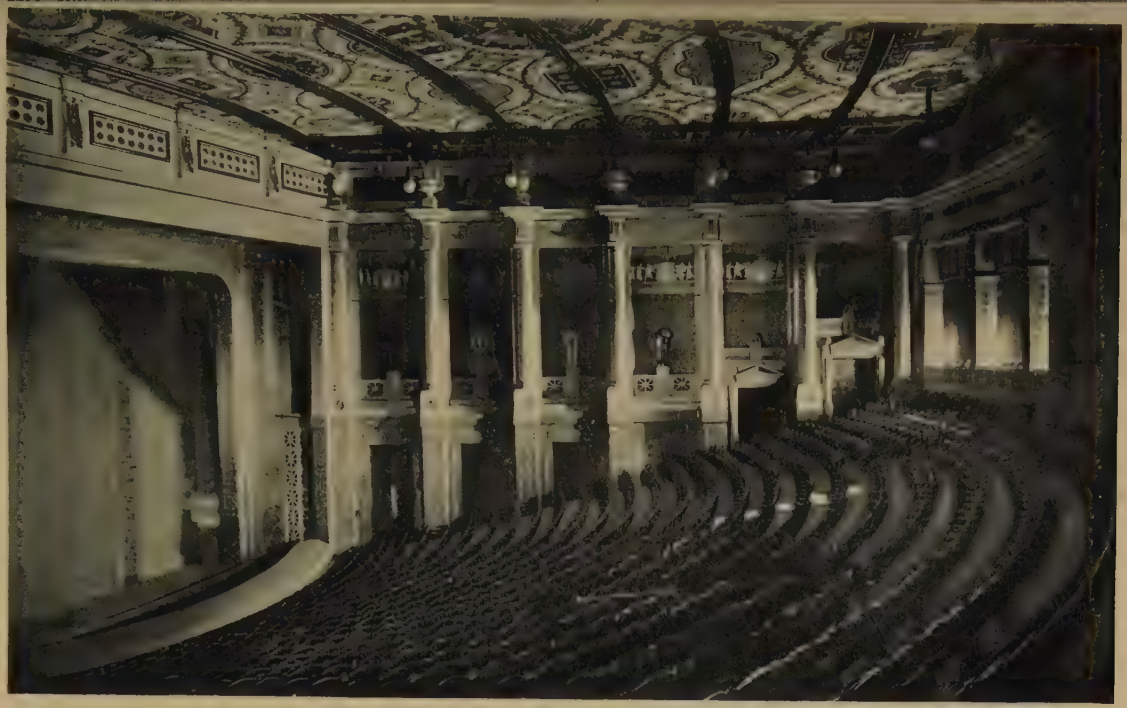
For on the whole the horse-shoe theatre fulfilled its real purpose very well. What was that real purpose?



From Hammitzsch, "Der Moderne Theaterbau," Wasmuth, Berlin.

FLOOR PLAN OF THE RESIDENZTHEATER IN MUNICH.

A typical eighteenth century theatre that has continued into the twentieth. An early French architect's drawing.



AUDITORIUM OF THE PRINZREGENTEN THEATER, MUNICH
PROFESSOR MAX LITTMANN, ARCHITECT
Showing the steeply pitched floor of the Littmann theatres.

—A visit to any fashionable opera house anywhere will answer the question. The glitter of jewels, the soft glow of feminine flesh, the dizzy mingling of colours in the gowns—who can say that these are not one of the principal reasons for the existence of the opera house, even as in the days of the Emperor Leopold? And this horse-shoe theatre, with nearly every box and every person in it visible from almost any point, fulfilled its purpose well, too well to let the undesirability of a part of the seats overbalance it. The auditorium, laid out like a vast canvas, where all the colours and spots of beauty were easily visible to every one, was too dear to be parted with. Abolish your boxes, set your auditors down in straight rows on the ground floor and in the galleries, and the whole pageant is destroyed. One might, indeed, see the coiffures and the bare backs of the ladies in front of one, and by turning around with great inconvenience and awkwardness might see the faces of those behind. But as for recognising a friend or a gallant—that were impossible.

The fact is that the theatre has been a social institution rather than an artistic institution, and this fact has dominated our theatre architecture since the Middle Ages. But as the theatre became, in spirit and in purpose, more democratised, the mere display of wearing apparel and the mere recognition of friends and admirers became of minor importance—partly perhaps because the democratic mob hasn't the gowns to display or the polished gentlemen to flirt with, and also—perhaps—partly because this democratic mob takes its art more as art and less as ornament. And further, democracy says, among other things, that if possible nobody shall have a bad seat in a theatre, no matter how few pennies he has paid for admission.

Imperialistic Germany has in this, as in so many other matters, taken the lead in practical democratisation. The Littmann theatres are perhaps the first effective attempt to construct playhouses radically according to the essential principle involved. This principle starts from the assumption that the theatre is built not to exhibit its audience but to exhibit its play. All shall therefore be arranged for the purpose of giving a good view of the stage from every seat, good acoustics and good ventilation, and this with the greatest possible economy of space and of money. Beauty is by no means a non-essential (quite the contrary), but it is to be developed from the utilitarian demands of the building.

The principle that everybody shall be able to see implies, in Professor Littmann's theory, the principle that each row of seats shall be at least eye-distance above the row in front. This makes necessary a rise in the auditorium floor, somewhat suggesting that of the old Greek amphitheatres, and from this fact Professor Littmann calls his theatre type the "amphitheatre," without implying that it is semicircular or "horse-shoe" in shape, like the classical theatres. In fact, one of the cardinal principles in the Littmann theatre is that the rows shall be nearly straight, so that every one shall have a direct view of the stage. The seats can continue to rise up to an arbitrary level which Professor Littmann makes the top of the proscenium, or stage frame, so that every seat shall afford a view of the whole depth and height of the stage. Accordingly the galleries, if any, must be short, for Professor Littmann will not risk the acoustics of the ground floor by overhanging it with a long gallery. Here, then, we have all the essential specifications for a Litt-

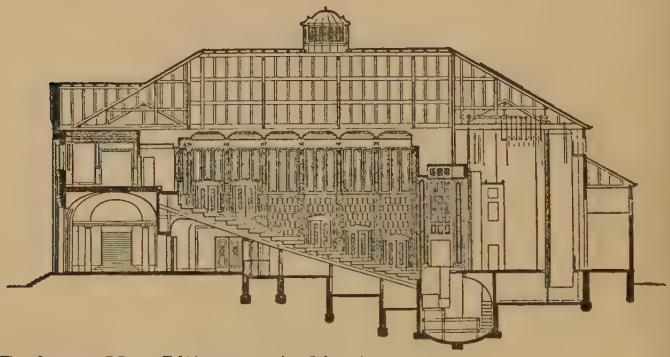
mann theatre, drawn from its utilitarian demands—straight rows, a steeply rising ground floor, and a gallery, if desirable, starting about where the ground floor seats end, and rising only a short distance, in no case above the level of the proscenium frame; there shall be no side or proscenium boxes, and in general no boxes at all except, when demanded, that of the king at the back.

For the sake of acoustics the interior shall be constructed entirely of wood. Sometimes there are heavy pillars or rather pilasters of wood along the walls, supporting beams which run across the ceiling, and these are regarded as having a beneficial effect on the acoustics.[1] One thing Professor Littmann insists upon—that there shall be no cloth or curtains beyond what is absolutely necessary. The Künstlertheater at Munich, for instance, contains no cloth whatever in its auditorium, beyond a light carpet for the aisles. The seats are quite comfortable without being made into sofas.

This "amphitheatre" principle can be applied to many different types of building, as Professor Littmann has demonstrated. The Künstlertheater is a small experimental playhouse, made for a special type of stage. It can use, or even waste, space liberally, because its prices are high and its audience will generally be a

[1] The question of theatre acoustics, which has in the past been an affair of the merest guess-work, even to the best of architects, is just beginning to become a matter of exact science. Dean Sabine, of the Harvard School of Sciences, has made a detailed study of the action of sound-waves in theatres, tracing minutely their courses and reflections, and has been able to apply his theories with much success in the designing of new theatres. He is frequently called upon to diagnose and prescribe for a faulty auditorium, as he did in the case of the New York "New Theatre," which was much improved in its acoustical properties after the changes made under his direction.

selected one. So the angle of rise on its ground floor is very high, equal nearly to a "whole head." There is no gallery. The Prinzregenten Theater in Munich is built for expensive Wagner festivals, has nearly as steep a floor-incline, and is similarly without galleries. Both have a row of unobtrusive boxes at the back. On the whole the principle is the same in both, except that



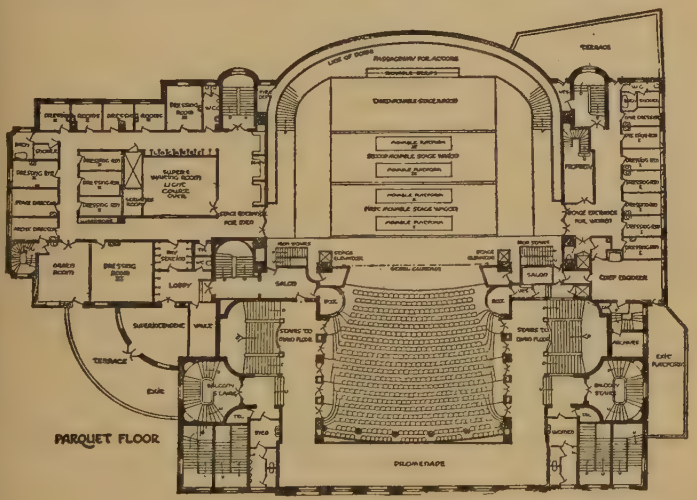
Professor Max Littmann, Architect.
From Fuchs' "Die Revolution des Theaters."

LONGITUDINAL SECTION OF THE KÜNSTLERTHEATER IN MUNICH.
Showing the steep floor-incline of the Littmann theatres.

the Prinzregenten has a greater seating capacity and greater economy of space is observed.

In the typical democratic theatre, on the other hand, Professor Littmann proceeds differently. Here economy of space and money is essential. If the cheap theatre is to pay it must have as many seats as possible. The problem, as in the Schiller Theater in Berlin, is that of making profitable concessions to economy of space—of getting as many seats as possible at the sacrifice of some of their ideality, while still keeping them all good. This means that there must be more rows,

and hence a more moderate floor-incline. The architect found it profitable to increase the capacity to 1,450 by adding a short gallery of six rows and 250 seats, slightly overhanging the floor. There are no boxes, since these would either be too far on the side or would encroach upon the floor seats; and besides, special boxes are contrary to the democratic idea at stake. The



From "The Architectural Review."

GROUND PLAN OF THE NEW COURT THEATRE IN DRESDEN.

acoustical qualities are excellent. It may be doubted whether so large a theatre is suited for all types of plays—whether an "intimate" realistic drama does not lose most of its reality 100 feet from the stage. This, however, is not a criticism of the Littmann principle, which simply aims to do the best under the conditions at hand. And Professor Littmann, when the money is at his disposal, prefers to build a double theatre, one

small, for the intimate pieces, and one large, for the operas and spectacles. This is, in fact, what he did in the famous theatres at Stuttgart, and it is quite likely that the idea will become popular in the near future.

Between these two extremes—the "art theatre" and the "popular theatre"—Professor Littmann applies his principles in many compromise cases. The ordinary court theatre, like that at Weimar or Stuttgart, contains the essentials of the amphitheatre principles, though considerably modified; when possible the boxes are removed away from the stage to a position where they will not obstruct the view. When the situation demands it Professor Littmann builds galleries, even extensive ones (for he is far from being a "utopian"). In his municipal theatres, like those of Hildesheim or Posen, he strikes a compromise between the court theatre and the democratic theatre, building galleries large enough materially to increase the capacity, in view of the necessary production of operas and spectacular pieces, yet keeping the angle of rise high enough to afford almost unobstructed vision and the rows straight enough to afford a direct view.

The Littmann principle is not, of course, the most economical in the sense of huddling the greatest number of seats into a given space. To a certain extent it sacrifices quantity for quality. But the scientific value of the experiments lies in their obtaining the greatest economy (of space and of money) on a given basis of excellence for all. Their ethical value is in their courageous assertion of the democratic principle: "There shall be no bad seats; there shall not even be any worse seats." In Professor Littmann we find not only the technical builder or the artistic builder, but first of all the economical builder and the democratic builder.

It need hardly be added that the Littmann theatres are of the highest excellence from the viewpoint of the actor and stage-manager.

The beauty of the Littmann theatres surpasses anything in Europe. One may be horrified at this statement, as one recalls the glittering reputation of the Paris Opera House and the myriad of others that attempt to shine in its tinsel glory. And if one holds a Paris Opera House view of life—that a plain space is an ugly space, that only in many curves lies salvation—a man may call the Littmann theatres plain and cheap and go his way in peace. But the great buoyant principle of modern art, and especially of modern architecture, is that of simplicity. Instead of finding our beauty in endless adornment let us find it in endless selection. There may be a question as to which is the more "beautiful;" there can hardly be a question as to which is the more noble.

At all events, the Littmann theatres, and the modern German theatres in general, have chosen simplicity, and no one can deny that they have worked well. The plain walls on the exterior, cut with exquisite vertical lines and combining the most quiet and restful proportions give them a dignity which comports with a more serious and universal view of life than that of the theatre builders who held that the theatre should adorn a small and specially nurtured class. The long plain corridors of the foyers, tinted with a delicate "discreet" shade, and sometimes decorated with a vigorous frieze; the fine, candid proportions, the luxury of beautiful wood stained in rich, harmonious tones, the dignity of the square pilasters, the decent simplicity which seems to say: "We are gathered here to see something better than our clothes"—among these things one feels that,

in things of the theatre, at least, we are at last free of the velvet paw of the eighteenth century.

From time to time there have been uncertain attempts and more uncertain theorisings toward a type of theatre which, though always dangling before us, has not been an actuality in daily life since the days of Rome. At last, thanks to the energy of Professor Max Reinhardt, and a group of enthusiastic (and moneyed) Germans, this too has been begun in Berlin.

The type of theatre referred to is that which is sometimes known as the "folk" or "spectacle" theatre, but which we may for convenience know as the heroic theatre. It is in spirit exactly the opposite of the ideal theatre of the last twenty years—the "intimate" type. It aims at magnitude—the greatest number of spectators, the most universal subjects, continual "largeness" of effect produced by striking obvious means, such as great masses of people, huge stage settings, the broadest kind of declamation and gestures, and grand sweeps of emotion. It is essentially that which the Greek tragedians had in mind. But many of the classic modern plays are equally suited to such performance, and from time to time plays are being written for the contemporary theatre which would gain in dignity and impressiveness when played on such a scale.

It was a Greek revival which gave impulse to the idea in Germany—Reinhardt's "King Œdipus" performed in the summer of 1910 in the great hall of the municipal exposition park in Munich. The production was later given in Berlin, and has been repeated several times since, to the material prosperity, both of its producer's fame and of the idea which it embodied.

The performance was essentially modern, and a fair

test of the heroic theatre idea. It was sneered at by the "nine times wise" because of its falsification of the Sophoclean idea. It was, in fact, utterly un-Greek. Greek tragedy, as nearly as we can know it, was a static spectacle, measured and planned, held under firm control in every detail, free only in the emotional force underlying its poetry and slight action, and perhaps repressed even in that. In the Reinhardt production there was the modern feeling, dynamic movement, a continual sense of flux, of pressure, of bursting the limits. One example will illustrate this. The Greek chorus ("chorus of Theban old men" in this case) was composed of twelve or fifteen men who stood still and sang their lines, or danced in set designs. The Reinhardt chorus was composed of several hundred men and women who rushed on the stage in terror and stretched their hands in supplication toward the altar. This picture with its hundreds of parallel and vanishing lines (the outstretched arms) pointing into space, would have been barbarous to the Greek sense. But the Reinhardt production was planned to capture the popular imagination, to thrill, to intoxicate. It was violently, breathlessly, moving. It was the old play played for modern people with modern means—surely no more illegal than playing Shakespeare with elaborate scenery. At all events, it succeeded brilliantly and tested out the soundness of the heroic theatre idea.

When played in Berlin the "Œdipus" was given in the Schumann Circus, a building holding some six thousand spectators, built in the form of a circle around the circular central stage. About a quarter of the seats in the great circle were taken down to make room for the heroic setting, a magnificent Doric temple. The whole theatre, then, became much like that of the Greeks—a

steeply rising amphitheatre comprising more than a full half circle with a "set" at the back of the stage, and the practical stage or "orchestra" extending out into the audience. There was of course no curtain. The entrances were made underneath the audience, from almost any direction, much as in the Roman amphitheatre.

This may be taken roughly as the type of the "heroic" theatre. It will aim first of all to hold thousands of people. The play will be performed without scenery in the modern sense, out in the midst of the audience. This last fact practically triples the theatre's capacity, since it makes the side seats as good as any others. Professor Littmann's sketches for such a theatre provide a steeply rising ground floor and two galleries, with rows of loges between, which is perhaps a wise concession to modern demands.

One of the most inspiring facts about the "heroic" theatre is that it will lower the price of admission to the size of almost any pocket-book. Such a playhouse in a large modern city, drawing on several hundred thousand or even several million people, nearly all of whom are economically within its range, could give very fine and elaborate performances and still make money. Such performances would hardly be continuous, but would probably be specially organised, three or four a year, and run till their public was exhausted. As to the quality of these performances, the Germans seem to have no doubt. Professor Georg Fuchs, one of the chief supporters of the idea, says: "It goes without saying that the first producers and actors of the age, as well as a powerful chorus, are at our disposal." He says no more on the subject; to him there is no more to be said. We may doubt whether such an opinion will hold for America, but—we don't know ourselves yet.

But there is still another and more serious doubt: Will the public, in the necessary multitudes, support such a theatre? The scheme plans to give the classic dramas, as the ones best suited to this type of theatre. Will such plays, traditionally the most distant and uninteresting to the modern "average man," attract the public which now spends its pennies on the moving picture shows (the very public which must support the scheme if it is to be a success)? To this question there is for Germany only one possible answer: Certainly they will. Can we not add that for America there is only one possible answer? Certainly they may?

Among the plays which Professor Fuchs suggests as suitable for this theatre are the "Orestes" and "Prometheus" of Æschylus; the two "Œdipus" plays of Sophocles; "The Cyclops" of Euripides; several of Aristophanes' comedies; some of the mediæval mysteries adapted (which latter suggestion we shall amend by a vigorous "No! In the original form!"); a number of the historical plays, the tragedies and the comedies of Shakespeare; both parts of Goethe's "Faust" and his "Götz von Berlichingen;" nearly all of Schiller's dramas, and two by a "very German" dramatist, Kleist. Professor Fuchs adds some of the operas of Gluck and Mozart, and especially massive productions of the Handel oratorios and the more splendid choral works of musical literature. And it is of course quite possible that many of the best modern authors might come to write excellently in this genre.

The nature of the performances in the "heroic" theatre would be quite special. We may take the Reinhardt "Œdipus" as a type. Since most of the action is in the open anything approaching an "illusive" scene must be out of the question. The back set, like Professor

Reinhardt's Doric temple, will be only in the nature of poetic suggestion. It will establish the mood of the play rather than provide a scenic background. All charm of detail, all warmth of "intimacy" must be radically dispensed with. In compensation we have those beauties, much more precious to some people, which come from grand proportions—broad "operatic" gesture, vast and noble colour schemes, the ring of heroic voices, the sense of great waves of sound and rhythms of emotion, and the suggestion of something mighty above and beyond the action, as though whole races of men were playing out their tragedy with the stars. One who has been raised in the realistic theatre will still have his doubts after the most eloquent description. But the thing once seen pleads for itself. It may be hard for us to visualise on the instant how "Macbeth," for instance, or "Henry IV," could be played in an open space, with only a conventional castle behind. Yet is was under simpler conditions than this that these plays delighted their Elizabethan audiences. And it is remarkable how easily the imagination will supply what is missing when the attention is fastened on an absorbing action or a beautiful poem. Even for us moderns it will be the easiest thing in the world to dispense with our dear painted canvas, and who can say that we shall not prize good acting and noble speech the more for it? The appeal of such pieces to the pageantry instinct in men is more powerful and common than we suppose. And we must not forget, in spite of "American conditions," that, in the words of Professor Fuchs, "the understanding, or at least the need, of art, is independent of social status."

There is perhaps little essentially to separate this type of dramatic performance from that of the open-

air theatre. The mere idea of theatrical spectacles in the open air is fascinating to most of us, and year after year the experiment has been tried in some form or other, as in the remarkable "Bohemian Jinks" at Redwood Grove, California. The obvious objection, of course, is that in the ordinary American or European climate weather conditions make any systematic artistic work out of doors too uncertain to be practicable. There is always, of course, the possibility of a canvas covering for such a theatre in case of rain, and there seems little objection to such a procedure, except perhaps the loss of ideality in the scheme and danger of unsatisfactory lighting. But it surely seems possible for certain favoured climates, such as California, parts of Italy, and (why not?) Greece, to use their out-of-door theatres systematically, and develop a local type of play for the purpose.

On the whole, though, the open-air theatre will remain an ideal of the joyous, sunlit performance which we shall hope to approximate in our artificial structures.

There is one other type of out-of-door theatre which enters not at all into the scheme of the commercial or state theatre, but which might have its part in dramatic life, remaining one of the beautiful shrines of the art where the gods themselves seem to come down from their mountains to take part in the performance. This is ideally represented by the tiny open-air theatre which Goethe laid out in the gardens of the Belvidere palace near Weimar. It is entirely enclosed by greenery. Its stage is perhaps fifteen feet wide by twenty-five deep, its "wings" being merely hedges trained to a height of some six feet. In front of the stage is a sunken pit for a small orchestra, screened from the

audience by shrubbery. The "auditorium" is a semi-circle, some twenty feet in diameter, terraced into three rows. The "stalls" are ordinary summer chairs. The theatre seats, at most, some twenty spectators. The scenery is only Nature's green, except perhaps for an altar for classical pieces. If there is (and surely there is) an amateur spirit growing joyously here and there, in the out-of-the-way places "where life comes from," such tiny open-air theatres might be the experimental laboratories where great ideas are forged, or the altars at which pure beauty is consecrated.

It is a most important thing that the modern theatre is becoming dissatisfied with the guest-rooms of eighteenth century aristocracy and is demanding a home of its own. It means that the theatre is developing the power to create all its own materials according to its own needs. This is the sign of a mature, as contrasted with a parasitic, art. A playhouse—a number of playhouses—built "so" because the art demanded them "so," and not because their grandfather was "so" or because their banker had whimmed them "so"—is not this another sign that the drama of to-morrow will have grown to man's height?

CHAPTER XV

THE SOCIAL FORCES: MODERN THEATRE ORGANISATION

BY theatre organisation is meant, for the present purpose, the relation of the theatre to its audience. This is the great fact in the organisation of the theatre, so important that it will be considered the whole fact. It really determines all the others. In the present chapter, therefore, we shall not concern ourselves with the relative duties of the stage manager and the stage director, nor with the authority which the director should exercise over the style of the leading lady's frocks, but shall attempt an outline of what lies beneath.

This is the more important because we rarely think of the subject in its fundamental terms. We have been so busy watching the make-up that we haven't seen the actor beneath. Modern theatres, in Anglo-Saxon lands, have removed themselves so far from their audience that we forget they bear any organic relation to it at all.

But if, as is so often stated, the theatre is a social organism, the society which it serves is an element in its organisation. The theatre can no more be explained by studying the theatre than the north pole of a magnet can be explained by studying it alone. Take away the south pole and you have, not half of a magnet, but no magnet at all. Take away the audience and you have no theatre; you can't even study what is left,

because, with the audience abstracted, it logically and actually becomes a totally different thing.

The organisation of a theatre, then, is the manner in which it is related to its audience. What the audience demands, how it is able and willing to pay for it, how it can make its demands felt, how far minorities have influence, how quickly changes in its demands can be recognised and satisfied—these are the conditions which determine (barring the important but subordinate and accidental condition of personal influence) what the theatre is.

Considered in its simplest form as a "social organism," the theatre is a group of people who pay certain of their members for acting plays for them. In certain cases the actors themselves do not demand money, since they support themselves in other ways and give only their superfluous time to acting. But ordinarily, in any developed society, a certain group must be specialised, and to that extent professionalised, for the work. Some way is then devised for collecting from the audience which has desired their services money for their support and for the other necessary expenses of the performances.

The simplest way of collecting this money is the primitive one of passing the hat. The most modest itinerant troupes of entertainers usually used this expedient, and sometimes do so still. It makes little difference, from the economic standpoint, whether the hat is passed to a single individual, a king or a noble, or to the rag-tag rabble. It does not even change the situation materially if the king or noble promises in advance to contribute toward a performance he desires. So long as the performance was initiated by the troupe itself, or by its managers, the system is fundamentally

Foyer of the Court Theatre at Weimar
Professor Max Littmann, Architect
A typical German interior. Great simplicity with vertical lines dominating.

the primitive one of passing the hat. And this has been essentially the system of all theatres since the Elizabethans made the drama a commercial proposition. It is only within the last twenty years that another system has begun to establish itself.

What could be more like passing the hat than the ordinary commercial theatre's method of collecting its revenue? Those who come to the play pay more or less money at the door. They pay it before the performance instead of afterward—that is the only difference. All the liabilities of hat-passing—uncertainty as to the size or generosity of the audience, utter servility to the clapping of hands, the social ostracism that attaches to entertainers who beg for their supper—these are present in full power in the ordinary commercial theatre. This theatre is suffering under the embarrassment of trying to force upon people something they haven't asked for, instead of enjoying the dignity of supplying them something they have demanded.

Nor is the situation essentially changed if a part of the receipts are guaranteed in advance. A donor may promise a certain yearly amount to the troupe, but this does not cover the very large margin of income which determines success or failure, and which must be secured by hat-passing. The subscription system by which our opera-houses and some of our special theatres secure an advance income may be considered one form of subsidy. It is rarely complete. Opera-houses in America and England must exploit stars and special operas of sensational qualities in order to make the ends meet. The subscription guarantee is quantitatively a help toward solving the problem. It does not qualitatively change the nature of the organisation.

The subsidised theatres of Continental Europe are

somewhat different. They do not, like the ordinary commercial theatres of America, offer something unknown and unordered. Historically they are nothing but a private troupe hired for the entertainment of some king or noble. In this sense they are not social organisms at all. Actually, in these latter days, they have come to depend upon the general public, and have in many of their external characteristics approached the new form of theatre of which we shall later speak. Their public is more or less secure, and the economic equilibrium more or less constant. But they still depend upon a floating public and have as the kernel of their organisation that apartness from their public, and in a sense hostility to it, which is characteristic of any theatrical troupe which makes its living by passing the hat.

A theatre is a perfect social organism only when it supplies to a responsible audience a commodity which has been demanded by it. If the theatrical troupe is the author of its own being, and is ultimately responsible for its success or downfall, it is in the position of a commercial speculator trying to force its commodity upon an unconvinced purchaser. Needless to say, in such a case the commodity is never exactly what the purchaser wants, and is often not what he wants at all. No artistic institution can live a full artistic life when it bears this relation to its audience. The sense of separation, the sense of hostility, is always there. The audience can observe the art; it cannot naturally participate in it. It is only when the audience has demanded the artistic commodity, when it is pledged to pay the bills, when it feels itself on trial for the success or failure of its work, that it begins that responsible participation which makes art live.

This ideal theatre, or something very nearly approximating it, is now in operation on a large scale in Berlin. Other theatres, of essentially the same organisation but less highly developed, are springing up in England and America.

The remarkable Berlin institution, which one would like to regard as a model for the future theatre in all lands, is the "Neue Freie Volksbühne," or New Free Folk Stage. It is a theatre owned by its audience, who number more than 50,000. It gives the usual nightly and matinée performances of new and standard plays at a cost (to members) of about a mark apiece —twenty-five cents a performance. The standard of presentation is excellent, sometimes brilliant. Mediocre performances occur, but the average of acting is high. In addition to its own theatre the society has made arrangements with twelve of the best theatres and opera-houses in Berlin for special evening or Sunday afternoon performances, at which it buys out the whole or part of the house, and supplies the seats to its members at the usual rate or near it. Far from receiving charity from the theatres so co-operating, it offers them a secure income for the performance in question—an advantage they are only too glad to accept. So influential has the system become that the New Free Folk Stage, together with other similar organisations, is near to dominating the whole Sunday afternoon theatre situation, and has a powerful influence on the choice of plays.

The New Free Folk Stage is not a charity. It is a business institution, made up very largely of workingmen and women who receive small wages, and it pays its own way to the last penny. It offers in its own theatre, not to speak of the affiliated houses, a four-

mark performance for one mark. How can it do this? The analysis of the situation on the economic side will be found in the following chapter. In general it is adequate to say that it accomplishes its results because it supplies its market instead of forcing it, answers its demand instead of trying to create it. It is a social organism, the two parts—theatre and audience—being parts of one indivisible whole. The middleman, organising commercial entertainment, constantly endeavouring to raise the price, lower the cost, and pocket the difference, has been eliminated.

The 50,000 and more members pay a mark for yearly membership fee and fourteen marks for their tickets. In return they receive tickets for thirteen or fourteen plays and operas, assigned to them, largely according to their own choice, out of the repertory of the society itself and of the affiliated theatres. Tickets for further performances can be bought at low rates. This income, plus that from individual tickets (relatively few in number) and from the refreshment stands, pays the yearly expenses of the society, the salaries of the actors, the stage equipment and costumes, the expenses of administration, and the rental of the theatre.

The audience thus owns the institution which serves it. It demands in advance a certain programme of entertainment, within a stipulated cost and of a certain general nature. It feels its own responsibility in the result and the better appreciates what it receives because it has made sacrifices for it. By indirect means and through its elected officers on the executive committee, it controls or duly influences the choice of plays and the general conduct of the society. Most important of all, it has reduced the cost of its art to a

Spielplan

der

Neuen Freien Volksbühne für 1912/13

Neues Volkstheater:

Liebelei, Schauspiel } von Arthur Schnitzler
Literatur, Komödie }
Einakter-Abend: Strindberg, Wedekind, Wilde
Doppelgängerkomödie, von Adolf Paul
Mutter Landstraße, Schauspiel von Schmidt-Bonn
Figaros Hochzeit, Lustspiel von Beaumarchais
Die Wildente, Schauspiel von H. Ibsen
Das Konzert, Komödie von Herm. Bahr
Graf Charolais, Tragödie von Richard Behr-Hofmann
Mutter Mews, Drama von Fritz Stavenhagen
Helden, Komödie von Bernhard Shaw
Die Hexe, Schauspiel von Martha Rögner. (Uraufführung)
Der Kaiserjäger, von Brennert und Ostwaldt.

Die Sonntag-Nachmittags-Vorstellungen beginnen am 1. September voraussichtlich mit folgenden Stücken:

Deutsches Theater:
Penthesilea, von H. v. Kleist.

Kammerspielhaus:
Erdgeist, von F. Wedekind.

Neues Komödienhaus
Der rote Leutnant, Schauspiel von H. Kienzl u. R. Goldbeck

Theater in der Königgrätzer Straße:
Die Ahnfrau, Trauerspiel von Franz Grillparzer.

Kleines Theater:
Das Licht scheinet in die Finsternis, von Leo Tolstoy.

Schillertheater Charlottenburg.
König Heinrich, von Wildenbruch.

Schillertheater O:
Zopf und Schwert, von Karl Gutzkow.

Trianon-Theater:
Der selige Toupinel, von Alexandre Bisson.

Deutsches Operntheater:
Fidelio, von Beethoven.

Neues Theater:
Der Vogelhändler, Operette von Zeller.

Theater des Westens:
Wiener Blut, Operette von Osk. Strauß.

Metropol-Theater:
Tata-Toto, Vaudeville von Bilhaud und Carré.

Blüthner-Saal: Symphonie-Konzerte.

Facsimile of the announcement of plays for the season 1912-13, of the New Free Folk Stage, Berlin. Showing the wide variety and excellent selection of plays offered.

minimum—not below the minimum, but to the point of elimination of waste.

But in a still more literal sense than this it will presently be owning its theatre. The old theatre building that has been leased for ten years has been outgrown. The society demands something new—not something "good enough," but the best there is to be had. Moreover, it must build this itself. Soon to be completed, it stands on the Bülow Platz, and will cost, including the price of the site, something more than 2,500,000 marks, or $600,000. Its auditorium will hold some 2,000 persons. Its stage contains a Drehbühne, two Schiebebühnen, and all the space a theatre of such ambitions needs.

How was money for all this raised? The answer is so illustrative of the methods of the society that it deserves to be given in some detail. First, out of the savings of the society the executive committee contributes 10,000 marks to start things. Then it collects from each member 10 Pfennige on each mark regularly contributed for tickets or membership fee. This 10 per cent. (it amounts to less than 2½ cents) is not a free-will gift; it is a business loan, upon which interest and compound interest is paid. The payments are punched upon the membership cards; after ten payments a member receives a stamp, after ten stamps a card which shows he has contributed ten marks. On this, as well as on any other contributions that are made, interest is paid at the rate of 5 per cent. (although not paid out in cash if the individual's loan is less than fifty marks). Free-will loans are taken in the same way, and there is some—although not much—giving of larger sums by philanthropists. When this sum, raised penny by penny, reached 500,000 marks, as it did

toward the end of 1912, the committee went to the Berlin city council and negotiated a loan of 2,000,000 marks, at the rather low interest of 4½ per cent.

Upon what security did the society borrow 2,000,000 marks? Upon no security except its future prospects. Even with the rise in Berlin real estate values the finished theatre could not possibly rank as adequate security upon a loan more than two-thirds its cost price. Berlin is already over-theatred, and such a building as that planned might not be easy to convert into cash. No, the city of Berlin had no idea of ever being obliged to foreclose its mortgage. For the Folk Theatre idea had come to Germany to stay.

Interest on the loan will be paid out of the future receipts of the theatre which, with the support back of it, is perfectly secure. The principal will be paid back probably not more than one per cent. per annum. The stockholders will continue to receive interest and compound interest upon their loans, and will ultimately receive back the principal, though payment may be made partly in kind. There would be no possible objection to this latter process, since the payment in terms of reduced theatre prices is a reduction on a desired commodity, and is therefore reducible to cold cash. But all these business arrangements are more or less temporary expedients. Essentially, the 50,000 members of the New Free Folk Stage are building their own theatre and paying for it. And they are building for the future. For as the principal is paid off, the interest lessens, the enlarged capacity brings in larger returns, and the expense of production continually decreases; the children of the present members will be receiving the benefits of the ten-pfennig pieces their fathers loaned the society.

In every real sense, then, the society owns and controls its theatre. That it does not exercise any direct influence over the actual administration is not inconsistent with democratic ownership. The administration of an artistic activity must be autocratic. The autocrat must not be held responsible for details at brief periods. The chief influence over him will be the direct, though modified, influence provided by the loss or gain in membership. The members are not, in the New Free Folk Stage, able directly and by themselves to cause the release of the artistic director. They are, by the constitution, given only a minority representation on the executive committee. The autocracy has worked successfully because the society happened to have a remarkably good autocrat. Whether this good fortune will continue, whether the society will not come to need a more direct democratic control corresponding to its increased intelligence and capability, is another matter.

The causes for this sharp division between the ownership and the administration dates back to the days of the society's predecessor in the early nineties. The whole story of the rise and growth of this institution, its struggles and hard-learned lessons, is so significant to the modern theatre movement that it deserves to be repeated in detail.

It was in the spring of 1890, just after the "Freie Bühne" in Berlin had succeeded in giving modern, censorised pieces under the "closed society" system, that the call went forth for the founding of a "Freie Folksbühne," or a Free Folk Stage. If we may call the Freie Bühne the father of the movement, the German Social-Democracy was its mother. This political pariah, it must be remembered, had then just been freed from Bismarck's ban, under which, during the fifteen

years or so in which it was illegal to talk about Socialism, let alone be a member of the movement, the party had multiplied itself many times over. In 1890, rejoicing in its new freedom of speech, it must have shown many of the characteristics of a lanky boy in his first long trousers. Certain it is that there were no bones made about the connection of the Free Folk Stage with the Socialist propaganda.

Here was the first call to battle, as it went forth from the pen of Dr. Bruno Wille and appeared in the Berliner Volks-Blatt:

"The theatre should be a source of exalted artistic enjoyment, of moral improvement, and of powerful intellectual stimulus in the dominant questions of the day. But it is, for the most part, degraded to the level of stale salon wit, polite literature, yellow-back reading matter, circus entertainment, and humorous weeklies. The stage has been subjugated by capitalism and the taste of the masses in all classes of society has been generally corrupted under the influence of various economic conditions. In the meantime a certain portion of our people, stimulated and led by sincere poets, journalists, and public men, has freed itself from this corruption. Such poets as Tolstoy, Dostoievski, Zola, Ibsen and Kielland, as well as other German 'Realists,' have found a sounding-board in the working classes of Berlin. For this portion of the people the need exists not only to read, but also to see plays of their choice. But the public production of pieces in which there lives a revolutionary spirit usually runs aground on capitalism—which has no place for anything but box-office successes—or on the police censorship. These hindrances do not exist for the closed society. So the Free Stage has succeeded in bringing to production

pieces of a propagandistic character. But since, for economic reasons, membership in the Free Stage is forbidden to the proletariat, it seems to me proper that a Free Folk Stage should be founded."

The "closed society," be it noted, was the device resorted to in the early nineties and since, in Berlin, Paris, and London, for the production of plays of the new school which would not be risked by commercial managers or were forbidden by the official censorship. These were primarily the pieces of Ibsen, and later of Hauptmann, Sudermann, Shaw, and others, which represented, above all else, two modern preoccupations, both looked upon with suspicion by the public and by the powers that were—the studying of sexual problems and the expression of the growing discontent among the labouring classes. Since public performance of these works was impossible, the persons interested acted them in private, with such actors as could be induced to volunteer, for the benefit of the members of the "closed" society, who defrayed the expenses. The societies, at first very limited and strictly closed, later became prosperous and took in members at the theatre box-office (the membership fee being merely the usual price of admission) so that the institution became only an open evasion of the law.

In the case of the Free Folk Stage the need was to give the banned pieces for a large public at the lowest possible expense. The plan was to rent a theatre for one Sunday afternoon a month, to beg or buy the services of the actors and actresses who were sufficiently interested, and to cut out every unnecessary expense. It was calculated that the cost per member would be something like fifty pfennigs, or twelve and a half cents, a performance. The new scheme caused newspaper

comment in many foreign countries, and raised a storm of protest in Berlin, where it was popularly known as the "Social-Democratic Theatre" for some months to come.

The society came into being practically as planned. On July 29th the first general meeting elected its committee, which included Dr. Wille and the late Otto Brahm, arch-apostle of realism. Wille was later made general director and the first performance of the society, Ibsen's "Pillars of Society," took place at the leased Ostend-Theater on October 19th. The formerly ridiculed scheme of Sunday afternoon performances was brilliantly successful, so successful that the commercial theatres soon took to the idea, and the society which gave it to them suffered from the difficulty of finding actors for its own performances. It must be remembered that the working people who formed the membership of the Free Folk Stage were the first in Germany, outside of the litterati who belonged to the Freie Bühne, to accept the authors of the new dramatic school which has since been triumphant the world over.

But not in vain had the daily press tagged the new society as a "Social-Democratic Theatre." The Berlin police took the charge seriously—as well they might, since it was perfectly true in spirit. Accordingly, early in the year 1891, they served notice on the committee that since the Free Folk Stage had been officially adjudged a political organization, having an influence on public opinion, it would be treated like other political societies and forbidden to receive women members. (It was only some half a dozen years ago that women in Prussia were given the fundamental political right of assemblage.) The court trial, pressed at considerable expense, was fought out on the distinction to be drawn

between a political movement and the art which expresses it. Wille practically admitted in his defense that most of the plays given by the society were of a Socialistic tendency, but asserted that the Free Folk Stage was still an artistic society, since it worked solely with artistic means. The judge decided in his favour, and the Free Folk Stage was permitted to live.

But not for long. For Dr. Wille, who had in that case been charged with being a Socialist, was now charged by the members with not being one. And since the new society was democratic in its structure and German workingmen have not many opportunities to exercise their power, the Free Folk Stage, in open conclave assembled, voted Wille out of the directorate.

This was about two years after the foundation of the society. Wille, with customary energy, immediately founded a "New Free Folk Stage," which has continued with brilliant success down to the present day. In this he sought to correct the fault which had caused the split in the old organisation. This fault had been not so much its democratic organisation, but its confusing of the legislative and executive branches. The executive, said Wille (in other words, himself), should be free of "any direct control by the mass of the membership." If the membership was dissatisfied with his management, it could withdraw. The general membership was given only a minority representation on the executive committee, which was made practically self-perpetuating.

In November, 1892, the new society gave its first performance—Goethe's "Faust"—in the Belle-Alliance Theater. Associated with Wille in the new venture were a number of the most able men in Berlin, men who have since become famous. There was Maximilian Har-

den, one of the ablest political writers in Germany; Ernst von Wolzogen, Erich Hartleben, and the brothers Kampfmeyer, now famous as dramatic authors; Emil Lessing, later regisseur of the Deutsches and Lessing Theaters; and Victor Holländer, known to Americans as the composer of the "Sumurûn" music. In the winter of 1893-94 the membership of the society increased three times over, because of the success of Hauptmann's "The Weavers," which, being forbidden public production by the censor because of its inflammatory effect on the labouring classes, could be seen only in a closed society. But the police took it hard, and in the following autumn chose to take exception to a certain play called "Alone," and ordered that all pieces to be performed be first passed by the police censor. This would have robbed the society of half its reason for existence, and the case was again carried into the courts.

It seemed like a deathblow and nearly half the membership voted to disband. It was with difficulty that Wille carried his compromise policy of keeping the society inactive until the trouble had blown over. So activities were practically suspended for a year. Then Dr. Wille, who must have been an excellent diplomat, drew victory out of defeat by personal visits to the judge and the police, making certain arrangements and agreements (not made public) by which the New Free Folk Stage was permitted to proceed unmolested. That the agreements were not compromises was proved by the continued performances of "The Weavers" and other pieces of equally revolutionary tenour.

During all this time the society had been on the edge of failure for financial reasons. The difficulty came to a head in 1903, when, for lack of a ridiculously small sum of money, it was about to disband.

This sum was supplied by private donations and the society straightway began a course of increasing prosperity which has progressed steadily up to its present astonishing state.

At this time there came over the society a new influence from outside which greatly changed its form and character. This influence was Max Reinhardt, who was just beginning his independent career as a producer with his performance of Wilde's "Salomé" and Maxim Gorky's "A Night's Lodging" at the Kleines Theater. The special performances which he made for the society were continued after he took charge of the Deutsches, and their popularity immensely increased the society's membership. This suggested the new policy, and similar arrangements were made with numerous other theatres, which were glad to assure large audiences for their matinée performances, even at low rates. The New Free Folk Stage began to give regular nightly performances in its own theatre, and the society took on the form it has at present, with the membership constantly increasing. The "flat rate" of fourteen marks for thirteen or fourteen performances yearly was found sufficient and will no doubt continue to be so.

Two facts give the New Free Folk Stage universal significance in the question of theatre organisation. One was that it sprang up spontaneously out of an interest in life. An interest in art as such, unapplied to life and living, can never be of permanent upbuilding influence on an art. Art is, somehow or other, an expression of life, as we have been told ever since critics began to lisp. And if we are not first interested in life we cannot possibly be interested in its expression. The real interest in life is that which would exist even if there were no art to stimulate or express it. That is

Wochenplan

für die

Veranstaltungen des Schiller-Saals im Oktober, November, Dezember 1907.

Sonntag	Montag	Dienstag	Mittwoch	Donnerstag	Freitag	Sonnabend
	7½—8½ Uhr: Dr. Max Osborn: **Alt- und Neu-Berlin.** Siehe S. 10.	8 Uhr: **Liederabend.**				8 Uhr: **Tondichter-Abend.**
Wechselndes Programm.	—— 9—10 Uhr: Eduard Bernstein: **Staats- u. Gesellschaftsideale im Laufe der Jahrhunderte.** Siehe S. 11.		9—10 Uhr: **Maler der Neuzeit.** Siehe S. 13.	Vortragszyklen. 7½—8½ Uhr, 9—10 Uhr: Das Nähere wird noch bekannt gegeben.	9—10 Uhr: **Komponisten der Neuzeit.** Siehe S. 14.	

FACSIMILE OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF CONCERTS AND LECTURES UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE BERLIN SCHILLERTHEATER.

These concerts and lectures, given at a low price in the hall adjoining the Schiller Theater in Charlottenburg, are in addition to the regular theatrical performances.

why our contemporaneous uplift drama societies are so often futile; their interest in life—when, indeed, they have it at all—is usually one stimulated by the drama they are trying to foster. In the case of the Free Folk Stage and its successor, the interest was there, founded deep in the labour discontent that has become the dominant social fact of present times. It would have continued and grown without any dramatic expression, for the labour movement was greater than the Free Folk Stage, just as life is greater than art. And just because the audiences of the Free Folk Stage were more interested in life than in beauty they attained a fine and beautiful art.

The second important fact in the New Free Folk Stage is its insistence on economy. Economy did not, and does not, mean stinginess; it means obtaining the most out of the means at hand. The New Free Folk Stage was forced to attain artistic expression with very limited means, and so learned how, in its later prosperity, to make its expenditures effective to the maximum. Luxury has a vicious effect on the character of art just as it has on the character of men. Art may have riches at its command, but unless it could also be beautiful in poverty it is cheap and unsound. Great wealth inevitably tends to substitute display for expression, the appearance of beauty for beauty itself. How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!

It is on this basis of a wide and serious interest in contemporary life, and only on this basis, that we can hope to establish a great drama. If that does not exist, all cultivation of the art is useless; the teachers of dramatic technique and the uplifters of public taste can serve the interests of the drama better by helping in

INTERIOR OF THE CHICAGO LITTLE THEATRE
A typical American theatre of the "Intimate" type.

an industrial strike or fighting a repressionary law against free speech. If this statement sounds wild let the doubter try to create an interest in art independent of an interest in life and observe the superficial imitation, the vain theorising, that results.

We are likely in America to see the growth of the type of theatre represented by the New Free Folk Stage, in which the audience, in some way or other, owns or controls its theatre, providing for itself what commercial drama will not provide. It must spring up locally, wherever the interest is sufficient to furnish the motive, it must be willing to work without fame, and even without recognition, it must be supported by people who are too busy living to bother about an art that does not respond to an imperative need. In such groups the passing of the hat will be superseded by audience-ownership and control. Out of an audience thus economically responsible will grow an audience artistically responsible, one which feels personally the art which it is in part creating, and brings to it the only test which has any real foundation, the critical sense of the reality of life.

Most of the spontaneous local dramatic movements of the last twenty years in England and America have taken the form of the repertory theatre, or of the society for occasional performances. The pioneer was the Independent Stage in London, founded in 1891 after the model of the Berlin Freie Bühne, and directed for six years by Mr. J. T. Grein. Like its model, it was the result of the interest in the new dramatic movement represented by Ibsen and distinguished by a critical attitude toward life and its problems. It was a closed society of the ordinary kind, using, to a large extent, volunteer actors and actresses for Sunday after-

noon performances. In six years the Independent Stage produced twenty-six plays, English and foreign, and an amount of bitter hostility hard to imagine at this distance.

It went out of existence in 1897, but two years later there was founded the Stage Society, later the Incorporated Stage Society, which has given first performances to some of the greatest plays of modern times, including those of Shaw, John Masefield, and Granville Barker. It gave Mr. Barker his first experience as a practical stage producer which helped to make him easily the foremost producer in England to-day, representing much of the best in dramatic literature and making a certain Will Shakespeare to live on the English stage as he had not lived for more than two centuries.

In 1894 a certain Miss Horniman, a woman of some wealth but no prestige in dramatic circles, lost several thousand pounds in the financing of Bernard Shaw's "Arms and the Man" at the Avenue Theatre, London. Her "failure" encouraged her. She had established a great dramatist, and the sensation was distinctly agreeable. Ten years later she turned her attention to Dublin, where a certain Irish Literary Society had been writing and performing plays of Irish life, revealing the full beauty of the Irish speech. After three years of occasional performances by specially hired actors the society advanced to an amateur basis, under the leadership of two music hall actors who had become interested—the Fay brothers. The players volunteering were clerks and shop girls, quite innocent of the art of acting and most of them not in the least "literary," who were willing to give their spare time to the fun. Out of this group was developed the famous Irish Na-

tional Theatre, one of the most perfect repertory companies in the world, performing dramas such as those of Lady Gregory and J. M. Synge, which are enduring classics in English literature. In 1904, at a critical period, Miss Horniman came to the assistance of the Dublin group and endowed the theatre for five years. Here again she "lost money." She claims it was not lost, since she would have had to spend more to "break into society," and then would not have had as much fun. After her five years' endowment the Irish National Theatre was able to continue independently. It was, of course, not in any sense an audience-owned theatre, nor was it in any strict sense the result of a spontaneous demand on the part of its audience, but it answered to a latent demand in a large part of the Dublin public, and, after considerable opposition, in a spiritual relation to its audience somewhat parallel to that maintained by the New Free Folk Stage. And the amateur spirit of its inception, the training of its actors almost wholly without tradition or formal technique, proves the soundness of the amateur idea and the reasonableness of the high hopes felt for various local amateur companies in America.

Before her financial connection with the Irish National Theatre had closed, Miss Horniman began looking for an opportunity to open a repertory theatre of her own. She chose Manchester, and after a year's experimentation bought the Gaiety Theatre, a run-down second-rate playhouse of somewhat shady reputation, and commenced to build up a new name for it by solid work. The whole of the artistic management was put in the hands of a hired director, who was supreme in his department. She gave performances of many sorts of plays, in weekly "runs," including not

a few first productions of young English writers, and, without paying exorbitant salaries, built up a company which, for ensemble work and true interpretative ability, is without a superior in England. The venture has proved financially stable. Although in its external organisation it is like the ordinary commercial theatre, it is secure and successful just in so far as as it can maintain the relation to its audience represented by the New Free Folk Stage. Liverpool, Birmingham, and Glasgow followed her example, and the two former are now maintaining excellent repertory companies on a more or less stable basis. In London Mr. Charles Frohman attempted a repertory company at the Duke of York's Theatre, in 1910, but the seven months' trial he gave it was not sufficient to establish it as a part of the metropolitan life, and it was abandoned. It brought to performance, however, one of the most remarkable plays of modern times, Granville Barker's "The Madras House." The Vedrenne-Barker management at the Court Theatre and Mr. Barker's present management at the Kingsway, are in a limited sense of a repertory type, though, to make sure of their success, they have been obliged to seek successful plays and continue them for all the money they would bring.

In America the last five years have seen the springing up of spontaneous amateur companies which are beginning to occupy a position of importance in American life. The Hull House Players in Chicago, one of the multitude of activities attached to the manifold Hull House Settlement, very nearly approximates in its organisation the early period of the Irish National Theatre. It has given, and excellently given, first American performances to some of the greatest plays of modern times, usually with just the sort of acting

material that formed the Dublin company—the clerks and working girls of the neighbourhood. There is no better ensemble acting in Chicago than this company gives, when at its best. Other purely amateur companies, giving occasional performances of the best plays obtainable, both standard and original, have made themselves permanent institutions in their respective communities. Such are the Toy Theatre company of Boston, the Little Theatre company and the Lake Forest Players of Chicago, and the Little Theatre company of Washington. Mr. Winthrop Ames's Little Theatre in New York is somewhat parallel to these, though on a purely commercial basis. The municipal theatre of Northampton, Massachusetts, and the Pittsfield, Massachusetts, repertory theatre owned by a few wealthy citizens for the city, are hard-working institutions aiming not to lift public taste with a derrick, but to give an opportunity for the best tastes of their audiences to develop as they will.

None of these ventures is closely similar to the New Free Folk Stage, but they all partake somewhat of its principles. Economically, they are either commercial or private in their nature, though the subscription system of the Boston Toy Theatre, for instance, is parallel to that of the German society. But as they progress and prosper they can begin to enlarge and solidify their subscription memberships, and, if they will, lower their prices so as to give their performances some wide social importance.

In some respects they may be said to owe their existence to the forces that gave the New Free Folk Stage its prosperity. They grew out of a sincere amateur interest in the drama and a desire to be independent of the ordinary commercial theatre. They are forced to

seek much in little, and to depend on a particular audience for their existence. They all exemplify to a greater or less extent the relation to the audience illustrated to the fullest by the New Free Folk Stage.

The economics of such theatres are investigated in the course of the following chapter. Here it is only necessary to point out how important they may prove as germs of the future theatre organisation. The New Free Folk Stage claims that it is the first example of a truly democratic theatre since Demosthenes persuaded the Athenians to divert the municipal theatre subsidy into the war chest. It points out the influence it already exerts over the choice of plays in the commercial theatres of Berlin, the greater economy it is able to practise, its financial stability in the face of the commercial over-production and continuous financial failures of the business theatres, and the growth all over the world of the very conditions as those which gave it birth. It asks if the commercial theatres must not eventually succumb, for the most part, to their own competition, and adopt the democratic principle. In other words, will not the democratic nuclei, growing up spontaneously in various centres, eventually absorb, because of their better stability and adaptability to surrounding conditions, the hat-passing organisations which are the remnant of another age.

Whatever the chances for such a consummation in America, the nuclei are beginning to grow. What is more important, they are beginning to develop as an independent system. The various "little" theatres are exchanging companies for brief visits, thus greatly enlarging the repertory the theatres are able to offer in a single season, and bringing in a far larger income in proportion to the money expended. Already there is

a movement on foot for the international affiliation of these companies. Each has proved its local stability. Each has held up its head under the least favourable conditions. With the enlarging of the system more favourable conditions will appear. Let the system of interchange once become firmly established and the next step will inevitably be an organisation of regular seasons, with performances every week or even every night, made from six or eight or more such companies. With the consequent easing up of the financial pressure the theatres, will, if they know where their future lies, lower their prices to the economic minimum and enlarge their audiences. When this has been accomplished we shall suddenly realise that we have a most remarkable situation before us. We shall have a self-supporting system of theatrical production, flexible to almost any needs, capable of producing, according to the demands of the audiences, the best (or, if desired, the worst) of drama universal—the while completely independent of the commercial theatre. This would have seemed a Utopian dream in America five years ago: the solid front presented by the commercial theatre seemed unbreakable. It is not necessary, or even desirable, even were it possible, to put the commercial theatre out of existence. But it is necessary, if there is to be a vigorous dramatic life in this country, to give artistic expression to minorities, to make possible the performance of plays for which there does not exist an overwhelming audience. The commercial long-run and "star" system has in the past made it impossible to produce any play that did not promise a high speculative profit.

The self-dependent local system will give an opportunity for free dramatic expression to the publics of all the larger cities. Whether the publics will take

advantage of this, whether they are enough in earnest about life to demand any real expression at all, is another matter. If not, then the question is settled, and the present system is quite good enough. But if there is any demand for artistic expression, the local democratic system will give it opportunity to develop, and not, as is the case at present, suppress all that might come to life if it had a chance. And if the demand is truly widespread the democratic theatre will eventually become well nigh universal, making the drama one of the greatest influences in the new international culture.

Orchestra of the Greek Theatre at Bakersfield, California
Louis P. Hobart Architect

CHAPTER XVI

THE SOCIAL FORCES: MODERN THEATRE ECONOMICS

THE great social problem of the modern theatre is its economic organisation. The theatre is the most democratic of the arts; it must be a part in the life of the whole people or it becomes superficial and vitiated. But no institution can be a part in the popular life when its cost is above the purse of the average hard-working, efficient man.

The American theatre, by this test, is not a democratic institution. Nor is it democratic by any other test. How much of the life and interests of the average hard-working efficient labouring man does it answer to? It follows slavishly the fashions and whims (real or supposed) of those whose money and leisure are something more than enough. And it is superficial and vitiated, as was inevitable from the beginning. "But," some one will say, "the labouring man has his moving-picture shows and his cheap stock-companies." It is true, and the very fact that he is expected to have an amusement place of his own proves that the American theatre is a class institution.

But still we ask: "What is to be done about it?" Are we to give each workman a dollar a week so that he may buy a second rate seat in a first-class theatre, where the best seats cost always $1.50 or $2.00?" The assumption underlying this question reveals our atti-

tude toward the economic problem of the theatre. We argue only from what is about us, and forget that there are other ways of doing the thing. Throughout this chapter, let us keep always in mind one fact—that the Berlin New Free Folk Stage gives excellent performances at a scale of prices ranging from 25 cents down.[1] This remarkable institution, as well as many others in Germany, is giving us the answer to the question: "How can we get the best art for the least money?"

If there are any who do not feel this ideal—whose question would be simply, "How can we get the best art?"—this chapter can have but little interest for them. But modern art—and most of all the modern theatre—does not take mere perfection as its ideal. Its ideal is rather: the greatest perfection and the greatest amount of it, or the maximum of service from given materials. Or, stated in the language of the business man: The maximum of efficiency. And this is not an unæsthetic ideal: economy of means is as much a principle of art as of business.

It is generally admitted that the Americans have managed to saddle themselves with the most expensive system of theatrical management in the world. This is not merely because our theatre is utterly commercialised. Nor is it because of the personality of our theatrical managers, who are often sincerely interested in good plays and artistic performances and ready to risk much money on them. But our "long run" system remains appallingly extravagant. A manager accepts a play, gathers a special cast for it, builds special scen-

[1] Seats cost somewhat more for those who are not members of the New Free Folk Stage, but such persons form a minor portion of the audience.

ery, spends weeks or months rehearsing it, and sends it out in competition with scores, or even hundreds, of other plays. To succeed in this competition he must be able to offer some special "drawing quality," a high priced "star," an elaborate scenic set, a sensational or indecent plot. If the word of the managers themselves is to be taken at anything like face value, not more than one-third of the New York plays, in most seasons, even pay expenses. In other words, two-thirds of the plays are expected to fail. If the manager is to make his play succeed he must see to it that it crowds out the others; at all costs it must be numbered in the upper third. It is practically in competition with all the other plays of the same class, either in the large cities or on the road. The business is a speculation; the manager can afford to take no chances with "art." To crowd out rivals he must outbid them in elaborate scenery or high priced popular actors. He must reimburse himself for these expenditures in the price of his seats. If his play falls in the two-thirds class (often through the whimsicality of the public or through pure chance) there is usually a flat loss of from $5,000 to $10,000; it is taken off in a few weeks, the scenery is practically worthless, and the actors who are thrown out of work are sometimes forced to wait a whole season before they can find new engagements. Be sure the actors take this risk into consideration in their salaries (especially since they give their time gratis at rehearsals and usually also provide their own costumes). And be sure, too, that if the managers are to keep afloat (and few go bankrupt) they must make each success pay for two failures—pay, that is for quantities of useless scenery and costumes and for the wasted expense of organisation, and cover the high rate

of actors' salaries made necessary by the high risk involved. All this is what you pay for when you buy a theatre ticket in America.

The question must arise: "Is it not possible to find some system under which, when you buy a ticket to see a certain play you can pay for *that* play and not for others that you don't want to see?" One answer to this question is the theatre-society resident repertory system, such as the Schiller Theater and the New Free Folk Stage in Berlin. Under this system the spectator pays only for what he gets, and gets, it can justly be said, only what he wants.

In the New Free Folk Stage the price of most of the good seats is about a mark, or 25 cents. Yet this is no philanthropy. It is a business institution, paying its own expenses and asking help and sympathy of nobody. The actors' salaries are low because the actors are assured employment for at least a whole year and because they can enjoy the economic and social advantages of living in one city the year around. Theatre rent, or what corresponds to it, is lower because the house is never perforce "dark." The resident company has few travelling expenses, can offer many different sorts of plays and therefore can hold a larger public. It can build up a large subscription list, which always makes for financial stability since it enables the institution to do its work on less capital. It can get far greater returns from its actors per dollar invested because one company produces ten or twenty new plays where the American company produces but one. It does not need to hire a special actor for a special part, because its actors have been working in many sorts of plays and can fill many rôles acceptably.

The performances of the continental resident com-

pany are excellent, far better on the average than the usual American performances. Let this not be misunderstood: there is often bad acting in these repertory companies; a cast is not often so perfect in its individual parts as in an occasional well cast American play. Thorough excellence in any performance is perhaps rarely attained. But a high average of excellence *is* obtained, and incompetent acting is an occasional accident and not, as with us, abundant.

Let us now make the same comparison on the concrete side. Let us take for purposes of illustration two budgets[1]—one accepted as the average for a first-class London theatre, and the other the semi-official budget of the Municipal Theatre of Strassburg. The former represents the long-run system in a great city with a huge public to draw from; the latter a typical "resident repertory" theatre in a limited population.

[1] In examining theatre budgets we must not expect thoroughly satisfactory results. Complete accuracy cannot be expected, since the field is very wide and from the nature of the case many of the reports are but semi-official. Further, there is no uniformity in the manner of drawing them up. "Rent," "interest," "current expenses," etc., are terms which rarely correspond exactly in any two theatres. Certain items, which are met in special ways, are often omitted altogether. Certain officials, such as Intendants and younger artists or executives, often receive but a nominal salary or none at all. In each theatre the expenses of the ground and building are met in a peculiar and complicated way. It is virtually impossible to extricate these factors and reduce them accurately for purposes of comparison.

In the present case there is no pretention of constructing a close argument from comparative budgets. The figures are offered only suggestively, and any conclusions to be drawn must be regarded as constantly subject to criticism and correction. Nor should it be assumed that a German system, for instance, can be transplanted *in toto* to America. Each country and locality must solve its own problem. The most to which this chapter pretends is to point out certain elements of extravagance and economy which are comparatively constant.

In the London budget[1] the fixed charges on the theatre property come to $1,250 weekly, the artists' salaries to the same, the stage expenses to $500, the "front of house" salaries to $250, and other expenses (among which advertising is a heavy item), to $1,000—in all $4,250 weekly. These figures might have to be raised for New York City,[2] especially as regards salaries.[3] To make money at this rate of expenditure the English manager must take in at least $5,000 a week. Accordingly, he charges for all the good seats (excepting only those in the traditional institution of the "pit") from $1.50 to $2.50. Add that from this system we get but one play, or, to put the case liberally, say half a dozen, in a season.

Take now the budget[4] of the theatre of Strassburg (and remember that the cost of living is higher there than in England). For 283 performances in the season 1911-12 the total actual outlay was $135,000, exclusive only of the orchestra, which was paid for by the city. Figuring the London budget for the same length of time (35 weeks) we should get a total for the season of $148,750. (The expense would not be so high, it is true, if the London play were to run through the whole season, but it is one of the liabilities of this system that few plays can do so.) The royal Dresden orchestra is (or was a few years ago) supported with $65,000

[1] Estimated by Cecil Perry in the London Daily Mail, July 12, 1913.

[2] To be counted a success, says "A Prominent Manager" in the American Magazine, a play must draw on an average $6,500 a week for 20 weeks in its New York run. "No New York theatre," he adds, "can afford to play to less than $6,000 weekly receipts during the 35 weeks of the paying season.

[3] "Leading men" who are not stars draw as high as $500 to $700 a week, according to the "Prominent Manager" quoted above.

[4] Quoted in "The Theatrical Year Book" for 1913.

a year, so we may surmise that the Strassburg orchestra would come well within $50,000. Of this not much more than half can fairly be charged against the theatre, since the orchestra also serves the town and perhaps even makes some money for it from its symphony concerts. Figuring on this basis we may figure the total expense of the Strassburg Theatre at $165,000 per season, or about $600 per performance, as against $148,750 for the English system.

Now compare what one gets for this slightly increased cost. The Strassburg Theater in the season referred to gave in all 283 performances of 109 plays and operas. Thirteen were free performances for some special audiences. The 36 operas of the year's repertory were given 131 times, and 14 ballets were given each once. The plays ranged through almost every sort of dramatic literature, from musical comedy to classical tragedy. The good downstairs seats cost in the neighbourhood of a dollar, with the other seats ranging down to 12 cents. This scale of prices for 290 regular performances brought in $78,750, or about half the year's expenses. This amounts roughly to $300 a performance, and since the theatre holds 1,385 spectators, it will be seen that the average price of seats (allowing for many vacant ones) is at most under 50 cents. The remainder of the expense is made up as follows: From the city, $42,225. From the State of Alsace, $9,000; from a private bequest, $5,000, plus the support of the orchestra by the city. Strassburg, it may be added in passing, has a population of some 150,000.

Compare these two budgets for a moment as they stand, from the point of view not of public service but of managerial economy. On the one hand 109 plays and *operas*. On the other hand perhaps six plays. And

the German performances, rest assured, were on the whole, good, conscientiously and vividly acted, with artistic settings and able orchestral conducting. No doubt, on the other hand, working under such a strain, the company did not give such finished performances as the London company may have given, if it was in luck.

But you have been saying: "Hold on! That theatre is subsidised. It has no rent to say; the state liquidates all its deficits."

Just what does this mean? In the first place the state subsidy is never a flat liquidation of all debts a theatre may see fit to incur. The state "stands behind" its theatre only as stock-holders stand behind their company—they pay its just debts if necessary to save the concern from bankruptcy. In most of the French theatres the annual subsidy is fixed by statute, and the money is paid over in advance in quarterly instalments. The manager would no more think of presenting a subsequent bill to the state than a manager of a commercial concern would think of asking the company's stockholders every now and then to make good the losses he had incurred through lack of efficiency. If he presents such a bill he openly declares his inefficiency, and out he goes. The Intendant of the Royal Prussian Theaters was once asked who would make good the deficit in case his receipts (with the subsidy) did not equal his expenses; he replied that the case was unthinkable, the receipts *had* to equal the expenses. Many of the German theatres are not so rigid as this, but the manager's estimate of the season's subsidy is always presented at the beginning of the fiscal year, and must be within the amount which local tradition allows.[1]

[1] For other European theatre subsidies see Appendix I.

The subsidy, then, is in general a fixed amount, donated by the city or state toward the lowering of the cost of seats. We can figure almost to a nicety what this amounts to—that is, how much more the seats would have cost without the subsidy. At Strassburg the total subsidy is $56,250—roughly, $7,800 for the 13 free performances and $180 for each of 270 paid performances. Assuming a conservative number of 900 spectators per performance, this would come to about 20 cents additional for each seat, or according to the German arrangement of prices, an addition ranging approximately from 35 cents for the best seats to 10 cents for the worst. Even with this we are a long way from English and American prices.

The amount given by the state of course comes out of taxes, and is therefore contributed (on the books, at least) by the well-to-do for the general good of the theatre, a procedure which is perhaps abhorrent to many Americans. But let it be remembered that these contributors—the merchants and property-holders—are not throwing away their money in a free gift; the German citizen is too far-sighted to believe any such thing. They are, in fact, making a business investment. The King of Saxony (meaning the property-holders, of course) has for many years given up to $200,000 a year to the support of the Royal Theater and Opera House. He has as a result made Dresden one of the musical centres of Europe, attracting to the city untold thousands of American dollars which were spent among the business men and property-holders who made the annual "gift." To some extent this is just what happens in all German municipalities, Strassburg included. The little town of Weimar, for instance, receives some $87,500 annually for its theatre, and as a result draws

about a third of its patronage from the surrounding country and small towns, not to speak of hundreds of foreigners who are willing to spend many months in the town because it can boast a living theatre as well as dead poets. The municipal subsidy, then, is a municipal investment. It has helped its theatres over the shoals of commercial speculation and competition, but it is not, and never has been, as many people suppose, a substitute for good business management.

But it is still true that these theatres operate "rent free." Again, just what does this mean? It could mean merely a fixed amount theoretically to be added to the general budget of expenses for the sake of comparison with a commercial theatre, as in the case of the subsidy. As a matter of fact, however, this is by no means always true. Very often the theatre actually pays its own rent, though the terminology of book-keeping puts the amount in another column. For among the "expenses" of many of the European theatres will be found an item, generally a fixed yearly amount, toward retiring and paying the interest on certain bonds held by a local "stock-company" (in the European sense). It was this "stock-company" which built the theatre and is being repaid, principal and interest, out of the theatre's receipts. So in this case the theatre actually does pay its rent, though in the form of interest. When the bonds are retired, the theatre of course has no more rent to pay, but in this case the amount is either applied toward lessening the municipal subsidy, or (more generally) toward increasing the quality and variety of the performances. So even when we find a German theatre with its bonds retired, that is, actually "rent free," there is often, in reality, the item of rent still in its budget, only, instead of going to enrich some land-

holder, being applied to produce the remarkable quality of performance which astonishes the world.

But concerning the interest on the bonds, there is a word to be said. This interest is usually very low —something like 2% or 3%, though sometimes rising as high as 5%. In the case of bonds at 2% it is, of course, not altogether fair to say that the theatre is paying its rent to the same extent as a commercial theatre would do. But here we discover an important fact concerning the economy which is possible to the state or municipal theatre. That fact reduces to this: that the state or municipality can raise money more cheaply than a private concern, because its credit is better. Three or 3½% municipal bonds will often sell at par, because of their absolute security. A private corporation, especially a highly speculative theatrical venture, cannot possibly raise money so cheaply. In this case the state theatre gets a legitimate business profit from its practical business advantage. But when the interest rate sinks as low as 2½% there is, of course, an element of free will gift in the "stock-company's" investment. In Amsterdam, for instance, a company of "concessionaires" raised $375,000 for the municipal theatre, offering only 2% on the bonds it sold. The amount was speedily raised, and the bonds promptly dropped to 65, as all the purchasers expected. These purchases were, of course, partly free will gifts, since the buyers of the bonds could certainly have got a better return on their money elsewhere. But the investors were glad to do this for the city, and we have seen that their gift was not exactly a free will gift after all. This situation is occurring continually in Europe, showing the practical economy to the city of using its superior moral and business security. In the case of

Amsterdam there was a further condition which is highly significant. By the terms of the contract the city could renounce its contract "at any time the Town Council thinks the public interest requires it," upon payment of outstanding debts. This may seem like high-handed dealing, and it would doubtless never be resorted to, but it illustrates the practical authority of the city to control its business and to place public advantage above private gain.

Even though a German theatre has no rent to pay, the fact might, for the sake of comparison, be taken as no more than fairly offsetting the two, three or four profit-rentals which valuable city ground is usually forced to yield. But for the sake of making the English-German comparison let us assume that the Strassburg theatre has the advantage of operating literally rent free—that the theatre was erected by public or private gift on land donated by the city. The interest, at 5%, on this expenditure can fairly be taken to represent the item of rent. The Schiller Theater in Charlottenburg, Berlin, a large, excellently constructed building on a magnificent site, cost in all 1,211,066 marks, or let us say, $250,000 (1,000,000 marks), exclusive of its adjoining buildings. This would give a yearly "rent" of $12,500 to be taken out of the profits of the theatre, or, according to our method of calculation, to be added to the price of seats at our typical Strassburg theatre. $12,500 for the yearly rent, then, must be raised from 270 performances, or less than $50 a performance, an average of about 5 cents a seat. Let us distribute this as before, making it an addition of from 10 to 2 cents a seat according to location. The item of subsidy, it will be remembered, came to from 35 to 10 cents a seat. The total addition in the

price of seats, then, to make a fair comparison between the English and German budgets, is from 45 to 12 cents. The prices of seats under this calculation would be from about $1.50 for the best to 25 cents for the cheapest seats.

We are still a long way from the English or American theatre in which the best seats cost $2 or $2.50, and no average good seat can be had for less than $1. For prices ranging (as we have calculated) from $1.50 to 25 cents the Strassburg theatre (which is only a type of scores of others throughout Germany), gives, let it be recalled, 73 plays and 36 operas of all sorts, many of them new. It is to Germany, and to the German municipal theatre, that we come for our Shakespeare, authoritatively played. In a comparatively small German city such as Stuttgart will be given premières of the finest German operatic works, such as Strauss's "Ariadne auf Naxos," for instance. Imagine Indianapolis, Indiana, being chosen to give the first and authoritative performance of one of the most important musical works of the age. These municipal theatres are continually discovering and producing new works, sometimes of tremendous difficulty, works which like "Elektra" throw all New York into a tremor when American money attempts to give them. Among these towns there is the keenest rivalry in artistic production and from them, even from the smallest of them, comes a continual flux of new and history-making ideas. The quality of the acting in these theatres, from one end of Germany to the other, is such as to make us feel we are in another world; we, with our long runs and specially hired "part" actors, know almost nothing of the freshness, originality and intelligence which three out of four German repertory actors, receiving no more

than a comfortable living wage, manage to put into their work.

It is not to be concluded from what has just been said that the state subsidy and aid is a negligible factor in the excellence of the German theatre. In the baldest money calculation, as we have seen, it offsets at Strassburg a fifty per cent. advance in the price of seats. But we have been making these comparisons for the purpose of showing that the economy of the German repertory theatre is a real economy, and not a mere process of saddling expense on a meek state socialism. Presently we shall inquire into the principal elements of this economy, regardless of nationality. Just now we have to notice that the state subsidy is not the comparatively insignificant thing to which we have seemed to reduce it.

When we say that state subsidy and aid equals an average of 25 cents a seat we are sadly belittling its value. For the value of the subsidy is rather moral than economic. It grew, of course, out of the expenditure made by the local prince or duke to maintain a theatrical company for his private pleasure. There was no thought of the company paying its own expenses. As the public became a factor in the theatrical situation a part of this burden was taken off the prince, or rather the company was enabled to enlarge its activities without an increase in its subsidy. With the spread of democracy and culture in Germany and France the theatres approached a self-sustaining basis. But always, during this process, there was a secure amount of money to enable them to build up their trade. This secure backing in the "infant industry" stage the English commercial theatre has always lacked; it has always been obliged to pass the hat to its audiences season by season

and to guess their desires, month by month, as best it could. As a result the English drama, ever since the first frenzy of the Elizabethan awakening, has followed after continental models. And while in England and America commercial rivalry was overstocking the theatrical field, leaving to each theatre only a small part of the patronage necessary to economical management, the German subsidy was giving the state theatre a practical monopoly in serious drama and opera. A private concern could not hope to enter the field of the state-supported theatre. Thus the state theatres of Dresden and Leipzig can draw on the whole city (each about 500,000) for their support, since they are almost without competition. Uncertainty and commercial speculation is deadly to artistic enterprise. The subsidy produced one or two good theatres in a city in place of half a dozen mediocre ones. The continental theatre now has reached its economic equilibrium; its managers know to within a few thousand marks what amount of money any given selection of plays will attract, and are able, at *the beginning* of a season, to estimate their needs from their plans. If this were not so the subsidised theatre would be obliged to expect highly variable deficits which would place the subsidy system on a basis impossible under modern political conditions. In other words, the "fortunate" conditions, supposed by many to be mere good luck, which make the subsidy system possible, are the result of the subsidy system itself.

The purely moral influences of the state subsidy, also, are not to be despised. The knowledge that the city theatre is a theatre actually supported by the city is an influence which brings to it vastly greater loyalty than would be possible under a commercial system. The

culture and intelligence of German cities has come to be measured, in no small degree, by the per capita amount of their theatre subventions. The most important moral force in the subsidy, perhaps, is the implied principle that the theatre is of public utility—that it is of public advantage that those also with small purses should have the best art in their lives. It is not, in Germany, considered "unjust" to tax property for the benefit of the theatre galleries. As a result the galleries attract a public which could not possibly come to our American 50- or 75-cent galleries. The theatre gains something like the dignity of a great public institution (as it never does among us) and is able to work with the consciousness that it represents not the idle-hour amusements of the leisure classes, but the education and ennobling of a great and busy city.

Let us return now to our English-German comparison and try to discover from which sources of economy the German draws his advantage. The London theatre has weekly expenses to the extent of $4,250, exclusive of the interest on the original investment in scenery and expenses of rehearsal and organisation. The German expenses of $135,000 a season (exclusive of the orchestra) come to $3,857 a week. To this let us add the weekly interest (on a basis of 35 weeks to the year) on the theoretical investment of $250,000 for ground and building, or $358. An addition of $77 a week might be made to cover taxes and insurance, bringing the total up to $435. Adding this to the other weekly expenses we get $4,250, or exactly, as it happens, that of the London theatre. From the budget we exclude the expense of the orchestra, since the London theatre employs no orchestra of consequence.[1]

[1] It is of some expense but very little value.

For something over $4,200 a week, then, we get on the one hand half a dozen plays a season, and on the other 109 plays and operas, of the greatest variety and of satisfactory quality, including singers, actors, chorus, ballet, stage-settings and artistic direction, exclusive only of the opera orchestra.

It may be said with some justice that the English system gives nearly as much variety as the German, taking all the London theatres together. But even if this be true it only shows the extravagance of the English and American system, which spends so much more to get the same result. Besides, the statement would by no means be true for an English or American city of the size of Strassburg. This variety represents simply a vastly increased production over and above what is possible to the present English system. But our comparison here is on the basis of artistic returns per dollar invested, and the superior artistic productivity of $4,200 spent in Strassburg is surely made evident in the variety produced, if in nothing else.

It might further be said that the English theatre could operate as economically as the German, if it had a virtual monopoly of the field as in Strassburg—that the fault, in other words, lies not in lack of economy in management, but in the competition of other theatres that take away the patronage which makes economy possible. But even if this were true, it would be only a more striking condemnation of the commercial long-run system, which is thus always at work destroying itself. This wasteful competition is part and parcel of the commercial long-run system, and the beneficent monopoly is a well-earned economic advantage of the subsidy system, as we have already shown. But the original statement is hardly true. If it were true that

the Strassburg theatre is economical only because of its monopoly, then a theatre in a large city like Berlin, subject to much the same commercial conditions as London, would have to raise its prices. Does it? We need only recall the Schiller Theater and the New Free Folk Stage, where the best seats are obtainable for from 10 to 35 cents. The normal advantage would lie with the London theatre which has an inexhaustible public to draw from and can run the same play through many successive weeks, rather than with little Strassburg, which "exhausts" its public in half a dozen performances or fewer.

The truth is that the English system is unable to take advantage of a large population; when it operates in a very large city it must raise its prices, not lower them. The German system *is* able to take that advantage. When the Strassburg theatre is transplanted, so to speak, to Berlin—when the large population gives it a huge economic advantage—what happens? Does it promptly lose that economic advantage, as would be the case in London? Or does it retain it, and if so, in what form? The answer only adds one more wreath of honour to the German system, or at least to the German nation. It retains the advantage undiminished, and *in any form it chooses.* It may lower its prices, it may better its product, or it may combine the two. It may become a "folk" theatre, like those mentioned above, with best seats at a mark or two. It may become a "Deutsches," setting a standard for the whole world in thoroughness and excellence of acting, in beauty and originality of setting, and in the daring and pregnancy of its experiments. Or it may become a "Deutsches Opernhaus," giving opera in the most magnificent style at prices ranging from 25 cents to $1.50. No, the

economy of the German theatre is not accidental or illusory. It is inherent in the method and administration of the system itself.

Let us now examine very briefly the sources of this economy. It can be shown most clearly in parallel columns, balancing off item against item. At the same time we must remember that this can only in the roughest way represent the actual facts. Any two possible budgets will be found so complicated and different in their make-up as to be completely irreducible for purposes of comparison. The parallel is offered in order to show the *sources* of the economy, nothing more.

The rent at Strassburg we have figured at $378 per week of the theatrical season. Let us add $77 to cover insurance, taxes and minor repairs, bringing the theoretical item of rent, taxes and insurance up to $435, as against $1,250 for the London theatre.[1] State management is likely to be somewhat economical in the routine administration, so we may put down $200 as against $250 for the "front of house" expenses. The "sundries" may be allowed to stand at $250 for both cases. Advertising, especially in the small city, is a very slight item—usually a mere matter of posting the week's repertory on the advertising "columns" in the streets, and inserting a small daily notice in the principal newspapers—the expense of which we might liberally estimate at $100. This merely nominal expense shows one of the legitimate economies of the state theatre, made possible because of its prestige and freedom from commercial competition. The stage expenses on the other hand, which in the repertory theatre must include the cost of new scenery as well as regular

[1] Three or four "profit rentals" are the usual thing in London theatre sites.

salaries and operating expenses, should be placed at double that of the London theatre, or $1,000 a week. These items total $1,985 a week, which leaves $2,265 for the artists' salaries, or almost double that allowed in the London budget. For the sake of clearness, let us put these figures in parallel columns:

	Strassburg.	London.
Rent, taxes, insurance.....	$435	$1,250
Artists' salaries.....	2,265	1,250
Stage expenses.....	1,000	500
Front of house.....	200	250
Advertising	100	750
Other expenses.....	250	250
Total	$4,250	$4,250

Thus we have reduced the two theatres to a fair basis of comparison. We have corrected for the items in which the German theatre might be supposed to have an unfair advantage, and, without straining probability, have found that the two require about the same amount for their weekly operation. The German theatre, however, saves tremendously on two items—rent and advertising. Both of these are typical appendages of high commercial rivalry.[1] In both items the money spent does not directly further the art, in both it goes to enrich private individuals. Both represent, par excellence, the speculative as opposed to the artistic side of the theatre. And the money which the German theatre saves on these items goes where? Into artists' salaries and stage productions.

[1] Theatrical advertising in New York, according to the "Prominent Manager" quoted above, costs from $500 to $1,000 a week for newspapers, and $200 for billboards.

This general relation between the artistic and the speculative will be found true of all the state and most of the private artistic theatres in Germany, and to a large extent in provincial France. High rent and advertising outlays, together, often, with padded payrolls and over-capitalisation, will be found in most of the commercial theatrical enterprises of England and America. The latter are in general extravagant on the artistic non-essentials and economical on the artistic essentials. The former are economical on the artistic non-essentials and extravagant on artistic essentials. But the long-run system does not even economise where it seems to, since we have seen it pays speculative rather than business prices to its better actors and keeps the rest in a state of anxiety, in which artists can never do their best work. On the "road" it gives its artists wearing work. Yet it does not get much work out of them, as we have seen. Then, having placed its money continually where it does not get artistic returns, it finds itself obliged to add on a high percentage to cover the risk of speculation—in America to make every success pay for itself and for one or two failures.

From most of this the German resident repertory theatre is free, because it has been able to concentrate on artistic essentials. Whatever our rough generalisations here have proved or failed to prove these German theatres have proved one thing to the world, proved it with a brilliancy that has made them, in these matters, the teachers of all nations—that beautiful art need not be expensive art, that great art need not be an art for the few.

But it is evident that this financial success is not wholly a matter of financial method. Any "patriot" of the American theatre (or of "American opera") is pe-

culiarly irritated when the German example is held up to him. "You can't expect things to run like that here" he expostulates. "*That* is *Germany!*" We have all learned to hold Germany in awe for just these things—the sound judgment and loyalty to art of the rank and file, the thoroughness of the German workman, the responsibility and capacity of the German "bureaucrat." We have a sincere but not very intelligent awe of the people who have these qualities, and—it covers a multitude of our own sins. We come to feel that because good and faithful work is the rule in Germany it can never be expected here. And we excuse ourselves for a wasteful and snobbish system and for mercenary and careless work by saying sadly, "Such things can happen in Germany."

Just what are these mystic German virtues, and why are they impossible to us?

If it be true that to explain a man you must know his grandfather, it is equally true that to explain a theatre you must know its predecessor of three generations ago? Recall the history of the New Free Folk Stage in Berlin—its origin in response to a definite social demand, its struggles to maintain itself against all sorts of pressure, its pin-saving and its final triumph. In some sense this is the history of nearly all the German theatres. Compare with this the way an American manager sets about to organise a theatrical production. He prepares it almost over night, sinks thousands of dollars in it, demands immediate and ample returns, and puts it in competition with scores of similar companies. If he fails he concludes he hasn't "hit the public taste," and tries a different method or a different sort of play. And when the public, perplexed with three times as many theatres as it demands, hap-

pens to give the play less immediate patronage than is needed to float the speculation, he complains that it is "capricious," and doesn't know a good thing when it sees one.

If a factory is losing money, it can do one of two things: It can either raise the price of its product or lower its cost of production. With the speculative spirit in the American atmosphere,[1] with the constantly growing wealth of the American people, the American theatrical manager raised the price of his product. And he also, since such are the ultimate ways of competition, raised the costliness (we dare hardly say the quality) of his goods. Thus American theatrical prices and expenditures have gone up by leaps and bounds, while managers were depending on luck or advertising to make their business bring a profit.

In Germany the audiences, heritors of many generations of culture, knew what they wanted, and, like most continentals, were essentially economical. So if a German theatre was losing money it was not able to extricate itself by raising prices, doubling its advertising, and seeking a more sensational play. There was only the one course to take—to lower the cost of production. If it failed, there remained only one more thing to do —to lower the cost of production still further. If a certain sort of play were too expensive under these conditions, it had to be dropped. Thus the German theatres, after decades of experiment with the advancing democracy, reached the equilibrium at which they knew to a nicety what could be done for so much, and what was needed to do it. Many years of such training

[1] George Broadhurst is said to have made $120,000 from "The Man of the Hour;" Augustus Thomas $175,000 from "Arizona;" and Charles Klein $300,000 from "The Lion and the Mouse."

would naturally produce thoroughness and faithful responsibility. When the equilibrium was once reached the expansion could begin on a business basis. A theatre could tell by just how much prices would have to be raised in order to float a more expensive product, and audiences knew that when they paid higher prices they were getting a better, or at least a more expensive product, and they came or stayed away according as the bargain appealed to them.

These German virtues, we repeat, are largely the result of economic conditions. The German managers, if they wished to keep their jobs, were obliged to give the best honest value, which is a school of all the moral virtues.

Let it not be supposed that German theatres are altogether free of inefficient "bureaucrats," that there are never scandals and suspicions in high places. These things occur, though much less frequently than among us, because Germans are also men. The fact should encourage us, showing as it does that a German bureaucracy is made of the same stuff as any among us. At a close view one might sometimes suppose a German theatre to have more irresponsibility, favouritism, and scandals than an American Board of Aldermen. But the results are there to show how efficient, in the vast majority of cases, the management is. When the real or supposed scandal does occur, it makes a great noise because (how different among us!) it is the unusual thing. It is a serious public concern. It is this that maintains the standard of management created by the need for lowering the cost of production.

The American system tries to force the market. The German system tries to supply the market. All the vices of the former uneconomic procedure have fastened

themselves upon American theatrical life. It produces huge financial waste, essential timidity in the sort of work produced along with great recklessness in amount, the despising of all artistic qualities which are not immediately marketable, and a vicious and increasing perpetuation of itself under which each loss can be wiped out only by a future speculation doubly large.

And why—here is the centre of the situation—why was the German theatre forced to lower its cost of production instead of raising the price of its product? Because it was dealing with an audience which had its own opinions. This audience was artistic enough to be philistine: if its art cost too much it could go without, or rather, perhaps, it was always able to produce its own art, to sing folk songs with the family, to organise its Sangerfests, to read its Goethe and Schiller. It gave the theatre its laws and working artistic standards. When it spent its money it demanded its money's worth. Then theatre directors, to take advantage of the growing democratic patronage, were obliged to supply this. The artists, who supplied this money's worth, knew they were watched and appreciated, and they asked nothing better in return for doing their best work, whatever their salaries. In short, the modern German theatre has set the pace for the whole civilised world in artistic work and in cheapness of production, because it has grown up out of its audience, the great democratic mass. And out of these relations have come the mysterious "German" virtues which we suppose have been handed down from Heaven. They are mysterious only in the sense in which virtue is mysterious to the vicious man.

We have been hearing that if the American stage is to be "uplifted" the "best people" must support the

best plays. But isn't it perhaps the contrary which is necessary? Isn't the first social condition of good art rather people's ability to stay away?

We have shown how a theatre which can throw out of its budget the commercial items can produce much more for the same money. Let us now look for a moment at a theatre which, under the same circumstances, can produce the same for much less money.

The Manchester Repertory Company, which for English-speaking people is the nearest approach to the German municipal theatre, is able to take in less than half what would be needed to float a London "long run" company. The problem is to produce the greatest amount for this money. The original cost[1] of its theatre was about $200,000; considerable money had to be spent to put the building into repair for use as a first-class theatre, but since this also raised the value of the property as an investment, it cannot be set down entirely to fixed charges. The interest at 5% on the original investment would come to $250 a week (figuring 40 weeks in the theatrical year). Let us double this, to cover taxes and insurance, interest on a partial mortgage, and costs of current repair. The stage expenses can be put somewhat lower than for the London theatre. The "front of house" expenses are much lower, since they represent not commercial speculation but bona fide management. Advertising is a great deal lower, since this theatre, like the German, supplies the market instead of forcing it.

The item of "other expenses" we can place exactly with that of the London budget. The artists' salaries, for a company of 23 people, come to about $500.

[1] These principal figures were kindly furnished by Miss Horiman.

Let us arrange these budgets in parallel columns as before:

	London.	Manchester.
Rents, taxes, etc.....	$1,250	$500
Artists' salaries.....	1,250	500
Stage expenses.....	500	300
"Front of house".....	250	100
Advertising	750	100
Other expenses.....	250	250
	$4,250	$1,750

To some extent, of course, the saving at Manchester is due to the fact that the city is much smaller than London, but as a factor in economy this is more than offset by the more limited potential audience.

The theatre, on this basis, pays its way. Now what is the artistic product? Each week the company produces a different play, very often a new one or one in its first season. The plays are mostly English, including the usual classics, Shakespeare, Sheridan and Goldsmith. They could just as well be foreign translations, so far as the expenses of management are concerned. The theatre happens to work mostly with the modern "intimate" or "realistic" play, and so is enabled to get along with one company of actors, albeit a large one; but its "realistic" character is conditioned mainly by the demands of its audience. The quality of its performances has become internationally famous. The conscientious accuracy and vigour of its acting are rarely surpassed in the long run theatres. Its ensemble has helped to set a new standard for England. Only in virtuoso work is the first-class London theatre sometimes superior, as is to be expected, but most theatre-goers with judgment are glad enough to dispense with the oppressive "personality" of stars year

in and year out. And plenty of stars have graduated from the Manchester company.

Why is $500 able to hire a company of artists of a higher general average than $1,250 can hire in London? "Cost of living" does not answer the question; prices do not differ so much between one large city and another. The answer is this: The repertory system uses, instead of wasting, the services of its artists.

If we want to produce in a season forty plays, each with a limited audience, which is the more economical way of going about it: to organise forty companies to travel around and cut each others' throats, or to organise one company and keep it busy? This is not an unfair statement of the relative situations of the long-run and repertory systems. Certainly it is more economical, artistically, to select, as far as possible, the best actors out of those forty companies and *use* their artistic abilities by letting them *create* anew each week, than to keep forty companies on long runs, where their work must necessarily deteriorate as it becomes monotonous. This is all the more true since, of each of the forty companies, a large portion must necessarily be mediocre. It becomes overwhelming as we consider that the condition of success for these companies is that they should run longer than one week—much longer—so that the forty companies, so far as their demand upon the public purse is concerned, equal four, eight or ten times forty. Some of them must certainly fail, their artists must be thrown out of work, the investment must be lost, and actors and managers must both try to cover their losses by raising the price of their product.

A good workman, especially a good artist, had rather work for $50 a week, with the certainty of retain-

ing his position creditably for a year or longer, than for $200 a week with the imminent danger of being thrown out on the streets in a fortnight. And the gain in the quality of work under the former conditions is tremendous. If a person is travelling continually, or is likely to be obliged to travel at any time, his allowance for living expenses must double or triple. The repertory actor, living in one city for the whole season, can settle down and reap the economic, as well as the social, advantages of domesticity. His work is bettered, his expense is diminished.

These are the economic conditions which the repertory theatre, like those of Germany or that of Manchester, takes advantage of: decreased living expenses, no travelling expenses, greater security of mind and of stomach. To this must be added the artistic dignity which comes to the whole company from the fact that there are no stars, that every character is recognised as an artist in his own right. Since the audience has come to see a play and not a star, it is in a mental state where it can appreciate the work of all the actors. The subconscious influence of this attitude in producing conscientious artistic work cannot be emphasised too strongly. The American "long-run" actor or actress is obliged rigidly to play second fiddle, except for the few moments in which he "holds" the stage, when he may jump out of the frame and dislocate the picture. The star, to be a star, must be a "personality" rather than an artist. For both the under and the upper dog the situation is degrading.

We need only refer to the great stimulus to creative production if a dramatist can write for a local community, as is now possible in Manchester, instead of being obliged to prune his work to suit a blasé metropolitan

audience. If America were dotted with these centres of creative dramatic production, we might speak with more hope of the "American drama."

By this time the reader is saying: "This is all very fine, but how are you going to reproduce it in America?" The only sensible answer to this question is: "Nobody knows."

Certainly, it is true that before a people can get a good thing—at least in art—it must first want it. Proofs are not yet convincing that Americans, as a people, want good theatrical art. Certain individuals do, of course, but the theatre, more than any other, is an art of the whole people. In its social interdependence lies its great strength and also, as in this case, its weakness. To have a civilised theatre you must have a civilised people, and there is perhaps abundant proof —in our politics, in our industrial conditions, in social life, in the heated state of the American mind—that we are not yet a civilised people.

Certainly it would be hopeless to try to transplant bodily to America this or that German institution, as the Metropolitan Opera House, for instance, was transplanted bodily, in all but state subsidy, from Europe. The present chapter has attempted only a rough analysis of the conditions which make for success in foreign theatres. Many of these conditions are potentially universal. Some must wait for the able man to use them. All must wait for the audience that is in earnest about life. In the meantime any one who is interested will find plenty to learn from German practice. Such knowledge helps to break down the provincial "patriotism" which is deadly to progress. It helps to bring us to that state of meekness in which art has a chance to grow.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SYNTHESIS OF THE FORCES

ALL this—the concentration of the arts and mechanical sciences, of deepening thought and great social forces, upon the single institution of the theatre—veils itself against the first glance. It is not until we have analysed each force, and seen the huge tradition and achievement that lies behind each, that we realise the peculiarly universal character of the modern theatre. And even then it is hard to believe all that this implies for the future.

We are in the habit—even in growing America—of looking upon each fact of the life about us as a finished fact. So people protested, when the city of Washington was laid out, that it was situated too far west to be practicable as a national capital. So men built Broadway in New York City, the avenue of traffic for the future metropolis, so narrow that two teams could no more than comfortably pass each other. So politicians to-day propose this or that petty law or amendment as the "solution" of the labour problem. And so we are likely to speak in the present perfect tense of what "has been done" in the modern theatre in Europe.

But if all the facts which we have been reviewing mean anything, they mean that the theatre is only beginning. It is impossible that these huge cultural forces should be brought to a focus, for the first time in history since the days of Greece, and stop just here. We

must think of the modern theatre as only experimenting. The forces have only begun to mingle and interact. Everything now is chaos, with hundreds of influences at cross purposes. A few results seem to us relatively complete; we are like the men who laid out lower Broadway. A few other results seem to us to need just this or that improvement; we are like the politicians with their amendments and "solutions." But nothing is finished; little is more than begun. The best theatres of Europe are merely specialised experimental laboratories. The institution of the theatre has only begun to take root. Only as it grows into the social life of nations can the results of the experiments be widely applied. And only as the theatre becomes broadly and deeply rooted can it receive the huge energy that is waiting to make it the greatest art of modern times.

The important fact about the modern theatre is not that it has brought so many forces to a focus, but that it has become an instrument for receiving and transmitting all the energy and beauty which these forces have to give. No one can suppose that what the painters, for instance, have already brought to the theatre represents any appreciable part of what they are ultimately able to bring. Compared to the art of painting, how small now is the pictorial range of the modern stage. And yet there is scarcely anything which the genius of the painters can devise that the stage cannot use and turn to the service of dramatic expression. Our writers are, with comparatively few exceptions, men of second-rate ability in the world, men whose energy and breadth are too slight to have permitted them to take a leading part in the administration of the world's great affairs. Yet, as the range of dramatic expression has been opened up in the last

four decades, there is scarcely any form of thought, any kind of human insight, any manner of fundamental and prophetic criticism of life, which might not be made visible on the stage.

Of the theatre, as the pioneers have prepared it for us—as it exists to-day—we can fairly say that its capacity for expression is adequate to any demands genius can make upon it. Of no other single human institution (excepting, again, the Christian Church) can it be said that it is universal enough to find a place for every contribution of value which men, small or great, can bring to it. This is the true meaning of the theatre as the synthesis of many forces. Its synthetic nature was foreseen by Wagner. But because he was one genius and not all geniuses put together he was unable to give definite shape to the demands he put upon it, and left scene-setting, concretely considered, more ridiculous than he found it. His vision of the theatre as a sort of church universal shrank as he grew older and weaker in the face of the dead weight of opposition that met him; he lost his vision of the theatre as an instrument of expression for all men, and set his heart on a single, exclusive shrine of beauty, Bayreuth—which in three decades became the laughing-stock of Europe. The theatre as it stands to-day is the work of many sorts of men—a few who are really geniuses, and many who are the next best thing, hard and serious workers. They have made it that many-sided thing that can present a face to every department of modern culture. And the democratic character of the theatre has made it a place in which every cultural element thus brought to it can co-operate with every other. The Christian Church was once that universal institution which could receive every gift that genius could bring

to it—music, painting, poetry and philosophy—set it to work, and synthesise it into a magnificent whole. Now, being fallen on evil days, she possesses but a fraction of this former power. And the theatre is the only institution of our time that can become such a universal synthesis.

But this universality will be but sounding brass and tinkling cymbal if it cannot be the expression of a similar universality in the culture of men. The potentialities of this flexible instrument will be accurately limited by the humanity of the society which uses it. If luxury and parasitism continue to be worshipped as they are now they will inevitably bring vulgarity and gaudiness into the art which expresses them. If men continue to believe that a large portion of society should be dumb and suppressed, then a large portion of the potential beauty in the art that expresses that society will be dumb and suppressed. If people continue to be complacent over the fact that the largest portion of their number are ignorant and overworked, then they will be complacent over stupidity and fatigue in the art that speaks for them. And if they pretend that all is well when they see preventable misery about them, then hypocrisy will give to their art sham beauty in place of true. The theatre has become too huge and universal to be nourished by taking thought for æsthetic laws. Expression of life is not attained by studying dramatic structure. So in the broader sense we can uplift the drama only by uplifting ourselves.

The democratisation of the theatre necessary to make it an instrument of universal expression is proceeding steadily. Nuclei for direct dramatic expression are forming everywhere. But "the theatre" is not an entity which grows of itself. "The theatre" is

only a convenient name for "theatres." It is not a force that can give life to its parts. It is the sum total of the parts which are vigorous enough to have a life of their own. The extension of the democratic theatre can be nothing but the inception and growth of democratic *theatres.* It will be great just in so far as the various localities have their own spontaneous dramatic activities. Keokuk, Iowa, and Austin, Texas, are the all-important parts of the system. A democratic society is great just in so far as it can live up to the social truth that the demands of its members (even the poorest) to self-development are equally valid. And a democratic art is great just in so far as it can live up to the æsthetic truth that the contributions of its members (even those in Keokuk and Austin) are equally real.

The many-sidedness of the modern theatre is something more than an accident. Fifty years ago it would scarcely have been possible. But the last half century, with its railroads and telegraph lines, its cheap newspapers and abundant translations of books, has brought the whole world astonishingly close together. These phenomena, together with the consequent internationalisation of finance and credit, have gone far toward abolishing national boundary lines, though nations are still loath to recognise the fact. They have made culture and social life international. In former times it was man's finest glory to be a member of his own nation as opposed to other nations, and the best art grew out of this fierce local spirit. Now, if a man rejects the cultural contribution of another nation, it can only be through deliberate narrowness of mind and stupid provincialism. And deliberate stupidity cannot create great art. The efficient causes of nationality of cul-

ture have nearly all vanished. And just as, with developing social organisation, clan loyalty gave way to national loyalty, so now, with the great modern social developments, national loyalty must give way to human loyalty. The nearness of each nation to every other nation has made this centring of forces in the modern theatre possible. It has also brought the culture of every nation to the door of every other one. And any nation that refuses this gift narrows itself and impoverishes its life.

And the theatre, now made a potentially universal instrument, can be efficient only if it is put at the service of an increasingly universal culture. We have offered to us, through the theatre, the greatest thoughts and most beautiful imaginings of some of the greatest thinkers and poets of Russia, Scandinavia, Germany, France, Spain, Italy and England. Each can bring something of his own to our minds and senses, and teach us things we had not known or felt before. Each can open our minds to receive something from his land that we could not otherwise have understood. The last excuse has vanished for the stupid patriotism that looks on everything foreign with suspicion. The institution of the theatre universal is ready to lay the treasures of the world at our feet. By our choice of good and evil we pass judgment upon ourselves.

APPENDIX I

FOR the fiscal year of 1913 the Intendant of the Leipzig theaters, Geheimrat Max Martersteig, asked of the municipal counsel $250,000. This was, however, much larger than customary in Leipzig, due to the expense of the Wagner cycle arranged to celebrate the centenary of Wagner's birth in Leipzig.

The Leipziger Buhne has collected the following recent data as to Municipal subsidies in Germany. The amounts are given for the month, and in marks (four marks equalling a dollar). Mannheim, 57,610 marks per month; Freiburg, 51,130; Frankfurt, 46,690; Breslau, 41,834; Düsseldorf, 36,313; Cologne, 35,644; Essen, 32,616; Dortmund, 26,213; Augsburg, 24,657; Barmen, 21,576; Aschen, 18,280; Magdeburg, 13,356; Kiel, 13,092; Lübeck, 12,919.

Material collected several years ago by Mr. William Archer, of London, shows the following Continental subsidies: Expended by the French government in Paris—for the Comédie Française, $48,000; Odéon (not strictly a national theatre), $20,000; Opéra, $160,000; Opéra Comique, $60,000; $5,000 to the pension fund of the Opéra; $9,200 for the library of the Opéra; in all $347,200. In addition to this the government pays for the maintenance of the theatre buildings, and expends nearly $50,000 annually for musical education (outside of the public schools) in Paris and the provinces. The city of Paris also subsidises two municipal theatres.

Municipal subsidies in the French provinces: Lyons, $50,000; Bordeaux, $50,000; Toulouse, $50,000; Rouen, $25,000; Vichy, $60,000; Nantes, $20,000; Toulon, $20,000; Rennes, $20,000; Lille, $20,000. These figures, of course, may vary year by year.

Other European subsidies: Berlin Royal Opera House, $225,000; Berlin Royal Theater, $50,000; Hamburg, Cassel and Wiesbaden Royal opera houses, $45,000 each (the amount varying between them from year to year, according to special needs). Vienna Royal Opera House, $142,500; Vienna Burgtheater, $130,000.

Messrs. William Archer and Granville Barker, in their book, "Plans and Estimates for an English National Theatre," made detailed estimates for a theatre of adequate proportions but economic management. A digest of their figures shows $23,000 a year to be expended for the general directing staff; $143,885 for the performers; $16,885 for the "front of house;" $19,500 for the music staff; $51,385 "behind the scenes;" and $47,540 for general expenses; making a total yearly expenditure of $302,195. This was to cover the expenses of 365 performances extending through 48 weeks, and came to $885 a performance, exclusive of authors' royalties, which it was estimated would bring the expense up to $980. It was estimated that a stable national theatre would require an initial expenditure and guarantee fund totalling to $1,650,000.

APPENDIX II

CONCERNING the inscenierung of Gluck's "Orpheus" at the Imperial Opera House, St. Petersburg, of which one scene is shown in Illustration 19, Mr. Meyerholdt writes, in his book, "The Theatre":

"We divided the stage into two strictly separated parts: the front part, where there was no painting and where everything was arranged with textiles; and the back part, given over to the dominion of the art of painting. Special importance was given to places which determined the level; for the connecting passages between the two determined the positions and path of motion of the various characters. Thus, in the second scene, the path of Orpheus to Hades lies from an enormous height downward, while on both sides, in front, there are two large rocky projections. With such an arrangement, the figure of Orpheus does not mingle with the mass of the Furies, but dominates them. The positions of the two large rocky projections on both sides of the stage make it impossible to mass the chorus and ballet in any other way than in the form of two groups extending upward from the two side-scenes. Thus the action of the entrance of Orpheus is not broken up in a series of episodes; rather, these are synthetically expressed in two struggling movements: the movement of Orpheus rushing downward, on one hand; and on the other, the movement of the Furies, which at first meet Orpheus sternly, but finally make peace with him. Here the location of the groups is strictly determined by the

distribution of the raised surfaces, which were worked out by the artist and manager.

"The chorus in Elysium was removed behind the side-scenes. That allowed us to do away with the usual discord between the chorus and ballet, which as yet do not blend on the stage. If the chorus had been left on the stage it would have been noticed at once that one group was singing while the other was dancing, whereas the homogeneous character of the group in Elysium (the Happy Shades) demands that the plastic expression be of one kind.

"In the second scene of the third act Amour, who has just brought Eurydice back to life, leads her and Orpheus to the forestage in front of the proscenium arch while pronouncing the last phrase of his recitative: 'Je viens vous retirer de cet affreux séjour, jouissez désormais les plaisirs de l'amour!' When Orpheus, Eurydice and Amour step forward the landscape behind them is covered by the dropping of the main curtain, and the actors sing the concluding trio as though it were a concert number. During the singing of the trio the setting, 'La Sortie des Enfers,' is changed into that of the Apotheosis, which opens immediately upon the finishing of the trio, in response to a motion by Amour." (This is an interesting adaptation of the conventional forestage to an operatic problem. The artificial nature of the transformation is blended with the artificial nature of the opera, through Amour, who is perfectly conscious of the changes of scenery and acts as a master of ceremonies.)

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